Men Who Made the Churches

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BY
PAUL HUTCHINSON

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FOREWORD

HAVE you ever wondered where all the Churches come from? Walk along the streets of any American city and you will pass houses of worship built by scores of different Christian bodies—by Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Disciples, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Friends. Each makes its distinctive contribution to the religious life of the nation. But did you ever stop to ask how each one came to be?

If you have, you know that the answer is, in every case, a long and complicated one. None of the Churches which we know came into existence on account of any single cause; all of them have resulted from the working out of numbers of causes. It would be quite impossible, within the limits which are necessarily imposed in a book of this size, to tell of the way in which these many, many causes, acting and interacting on each other, brought these communions to birth.

Yet there is one fact that is common to the history of all the Churches. When they were born, there was always some one man, or some little group of men, who gathered up in an individual career the working of the forces which produced the new fellowship. These men can

truly be spoken of as, under God, the "fathers" of our Protestant Churches. And when the story of their lives has been told—as I shall try to tell it in this series of sketches—the result is bound to be a close approximation to the answer to our opening question: Where did all the Churches come from?
P. H.

CHICAGO, ILL.

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I

LUTHER: THE MONK WHO SHOOK EUROPE FREE

I

LUTHER: THE MONK WHO SHOOK EUROPE FREE

It is the year 1521.

A year to remember, that. A year when the very air seems electric. A year when men find themselves living on tiptoe. A year lusty with the sense of great things accomplished; vibrant with the expectation of greater things to be.

Down at the seaports of Europe the sailors line the docks, gazing with a new expectancy toward the horizon. What sail will next lift above that margin? What tale of new lands, of new feats of seamanly daring will next be brought to the ears of a startled continent?

Only thirty-five years before one of those adventurous Portuguese, Diaz by name, had pushed his way about the Cape of Good Hope, and up the east coast of Africa. Six years more and that Genoese adventurer, Columbus, had returned from his voyage westward to tell his Spanish patrons of the islands he had found athwart his path to the spices of the Orient. Balked by those same islands, de Gama had waited only another six years to make the jump from the African coast across the Indian Ocean to the storied India which the Spanish ships had sought in vain.

And now, what next?

One day there is a stirring along the docks of Seville. A little craft is beating its way before the wind; a craft that shows the marks of wind and weather. "What ship is that? Ahoy there, what ship is that?"

"This is the *Vittoria*—the Victory—only survivor of the fleet of Fernando Magellan, three years out of this port, and returning by way of Rio de Janeiro, the Straits of Magellan, the Philippines, and the Cape."

The globe has been circumnavigated!

It is a time, too, when men's minds thrive with the possession of new inventions, as well as with the excitement of new geographical discoveries. New comfort comes with the use of glass for windows, and as chimneys for lamps beside which a man may read late o' nights. Chemicals are used to transmute the refractory ores to the will of the iron founder and his fellow craftsmen. Clocks bring a new order and regularity into life. The compass tempts the mariner to still uncharted seas. Gunpowder sounds the knell of feudalism. And the printing press—ah, what a day was that when John Gutenberg of Mayence put the first editorial O. K. at the foot of the first page proof of a sheet printed on a rigid press and from movable type!

So, much as men's minds have been stirred by these outward triumphs, they have been even more profoundly moved by the impact of new ideas, which are now available to men in the mass as they have never been before. In 1521 it is only seventy-five years since Gutenberg produced his first finished job of printing in Mayence. But the new invention has spread like wildfire. Presses are set up in Italy in 1465, Paris in 1470, London in 1480, Stockholm in 1482, Constantinople in 1487, Lisbon in 1490, Madrid in 1499. At the turn of the century there are more than a thousand printers producing regularly; almost 30,000 separate printed works are on the market!

Hand in hand with this extension of the means of learning there goes the spread of education. The end of the intellectual reign of the monasteries and of the monkish Latin has come. Universities are springing up all over Europe. Germany alone has seen the founding of nine such centers between 1450 and 1517. There is a new university at Wittenberg, founded only nineteen years ago, in 1502, that is attracting the attention of all Europe because . . . but we will come to that story presently.

* * * *

1521, and the city of Worms.

Excitement runs high in this ancient town, for because it is a free imperial city, not subject to the rule of any of the princes of Germany, it has been chosen by the Emperor of that vast and sprawling realm, the Holy Roman Empire of the

German Nation, as the scene of his first imperial diet. The Emperor has traveled from his palace in Madrid (he is the grandson of that Ferdinand and Isabella who sent Columbus on his way) to this gathering to settle various affairs of state, and incidentally to discover whether he is to be the real ruler of Germany, or whether the German lords are strong enough to reduce his power to a pretense. And the German lords are there, naturally, to find out with what sort of emperor they have to deal.

It is the prelude to a struggle that is to last until the most of Europe has been soaked in blood.

Political questions probably bulk largest in the mind of the new Emperor. There are the German princes who have voted to place him on the imperial throne, led by Frederic of Saxony. How can he keep them friendly and yet obedient? There is the legate of the pope, who might at any moment throw the enormous power of the Church to the Emperor's rival, Francis I of France. How can he be kept content? Political questions these, to be handled in a political fashion.

But into the midst of such matters there is thrust another. It seems that there is a young monk, a professor of theology in the new university at Wittenberg. He has written some things, and said others, that have enormously excited these Germans. The pope demands action from the diet. The young monk's name, so the Emperor sees by a glance at the agenda, is Martin Luther.

The twenty-year-old Emperor probably knows very little about the case, but the legate of the pope tells him that he has been unable to deal with it through the usual churchly channels because this professor enjoys the favor of powerful Frederic of Saxony, and the support of many other nobles. Moreover, he is a good deal of a hero with the masses. The Emperor feels that he must proceed carefully in dealing with a man with such backing, and proposes to give him a hearing. The legate protests. Since the pope has already decided against the trouble-making professor, it remains only for the Emperor to punish. But the Emperor will not offend the Elector of Saxony. Luther is given a safe-conduct that brings him to Worms.

* * * *

Late afternoon of an April day, 1521.

The imperial diet is crowded. Various priests are in charge of the proceedings. The nobles sit in tense excitement. The Emperor muses on his throne.

Suddenly the door opens. Into the midst of this expectant company there strides a straight, slight, ascetic figure, robed in the white gown of an Augustinian monk. He is thirty-eight years old. Long and boldly he looks into the eyes of this twenty-year-old Emperor who apparently holds his life in his imperial hands.

Luther and Charles the Fifth—Charles the Fifth and Martin Luther—the two personifications of the forces that were to rend all Europe before this sixteenth century is done, are face to face with each other.

The titles of a number of books are read out. The monk is asked if they are books which he has written, and if he will recant the heresy which they contain. The question surprises him. He had expected to be called on to face definite charges and to argue as to definite statements which he has made. It is hard to know how to deal with a blanket demand of this sort. He asks for time to consider. One day is granted.

The next day he comes back, to face the same audience. This time there is no hesitation. Are the books his? Of course they are. Do they contain statements which are repugnant to the pope? Of course they do. Will he recant? Then comes the thunder:

"Unless I am convicted by Scripture or by right reason (for I trust neither popes nor councils since they have often erred and contradicted themselves), . . . I neither can nor will recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to act against conscience. God help me. Amen."

The Emperor has no choice. To the excommunication of the pope is added the condemnation of the monarch. Luther from that day is, legally, an outlaw. But his friends are powerful enough to protect him. He is hidden away for ten months in one of the castles of the Elector of Saxony, and then comes out to lead in the movement that history knows as the Reformation.

* * * *

That April afternoon in 1521 was undoubtedly the high hour of Luther's life. But before it and after it there came plenty of other hours that have had a profound effect on world history.

The career of young Martin Luther was just such a career as opened to many a boy in those days when the influence of the Renaissance was spreading through Europe. Born in 1483, the omnipresent desire to share in the new learning now available to all classes made his parents, although peasants, undergo stern privations to make possible the education of their son. Partly by begging and partly through the help of a charitable woman, Ursala Cotta, Luther managed to make his way up to and through the famous University of Erfurt, where he took his bachelor's degree in 1502 and his master's degree three years later.

It was the expectation of the Luther family that the brilliant young scholar would become a lawyer, but suddenly, to fulfill an oath taken when terrorized in the midst of a terrible thunder-storm, the scholar renounced the world, entered a monastery, and became a begging monk.

The intellectual power of the new priest soon attracted the attention of the head of the Augustinian order in Germany. He was given promotion after promotion, even being trusted with an important mission to Rome. There are several tales as to the effect of that visit on Luther's mind, but cold history rejects most of these as unfounded legends. It only seems certain that Luther returned from Rome to Germany disillusioned as to the spiritual state of the court of the supreme pontiff.

That was not only natural; it was practically inevitable. The papacy was, when Luther visited Rome, at one of the lowest moral points in its checkered history. The notorious Alexander VI, whose crimes were only surpassed by those of his children, Cæsar Borgia and Lucretia, had just passed off the scene, having brought about the burning of Savonarola for his presumption in attacking the abuses of papacy and priesthood. For ten years, Julius II, an old man, had given back to the papal throne some of its lost prestige. But by the time Luther reached Rome, the pope who was to excommunicate him was in power.

A son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, Leo X was made a priest at seven, a cardinal at thirteen, and pope at thirty-eight. "Let us enjoy the papacy, since God has given it to us," he said to the Venetian ambassador. Enjoy it he did. Spending money like water, his court became a monstrosity of profligacy. He soon exhausted all the papal treasuries. To make up the enormous sums which his excesses required, the offices of the Church were shamelessly sold. And when even that illegitimate source of revenue proved insufficient, indulgences were sold on almost as wholesale a scale as to-day the five- and ten-cent stores dispense their wares.

Perhaps a word needs to be said about these indulgences. They were an outgrowth of Catholic theology. It was held that most men could not, even by confession and the doing of penace, wipe out in this life the full score of sins for which they must be punished, but that they must, in an after-state called purgatory, be further punished and thus cleansed before they could be admitted to the holy presence of God.

But the pope was the all-powerful representative of God. So it was held that the pope could issue a pardon, or indulgence, that would reduce the punishment a contrite sinner would have to undergo in purgatory. But when the granting of these indulgences was made a regular business, with certain men authorized in the name of the pope to sell them to all who cared to buy, at rates of pay which the sellers themselves set, and with the sellers sharing in a definite percentage of the income, it can be seen how certain terrible abuses were to arise.

* * * *

But what has become of Martin Luther while we have been talking about the sixteenth-century popes and their system of indulgence selling? He has gone back from Rome to his native Germany. There his superior in the Augustinian order of monks has made him a professor in the recently established University of Wittenberg. As he lectures on the Bible, his reputation begins to spread. Within four years the university confers upon him the degree of Doctor of Theology—the highest honor it has to give.

When you think of the Protestant Reformation it is well to bear this fact in mind—it was fathered by a professor in a theological seminary. Luther was such a robustious person, and played such an enormous part in all the affairs of the Germany of his time, that it is sometimes forgotten that he spent his whole active life as a professor at Wittenberg, seldom venturing away from that town, and moving Europe by what he wrote in his study, what he lectured in his classroom, what he preached in the Wittenberg church, more than by any other means. The Reformation was, in this sense, a thinker's revolution.

As a professor, Luther lectured mainly on the Psalms and the writings of St. Paul. (Years later, John Bunyan was to be deeply stirred by

Luther's comments on the Epistle to the Philippians, and John Wesley felt his heart "strangely warmed" as he listened to a reading from Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans.) It was the great word of Paul, "The just shall live by faith," that gave him his own inner religious satisfaction, after years of passionate search. Rejecting any hope of attaining merit by his own deeds, or the possibility that a sinful man *could* so attain, Luther threw himself, with all his hopes and needs, alone, without help of Church or priest or rite, into the hands of God, and there found an inner peace that was evidence to him that God had pardoned and accepted him.

It was this immediate contact between the individual soul and God that he had himself experienced that Luther taught in Wittenberg. But while he was in the full tide of his success as a teacher, there arose an issue which changed the whole course of his life. By one of the deals all too common in that age, the pope sold a certain German archbishopric to a secular prince—a Hohenzollern, by the way—for several hundred thousand dollars. To help him get the money, the pope declared an indulgence, and a Dominican named John Tetzel came into Germany as the chief peddler of these precious scraps of paper. Half of the proceeds were to go to the archbishop, and half were to go over the Alps to Rome.

The Elector of Saxony refused to allow this money-draining business to enter his territory. But when Tetzel approached as near the Saxon border as he could get, Luther, who saw the common people mulcting themselves to buy, determined to have a public threshing out of the whole question as to the right or wrong of the traffic. Accordingly, he posted on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg a series of ninety-five propositions, or theses, dealing with various phases of the matter, and invited all who would to discuss these with him.

To Luther, with his personal conception of religion, the theory on which the indulgences rested seemed wrong. But he was no man to rush blindly ahead in denunciation, and his invitation to discussion was sincere. No one, however, appeared to dispute his propositions. Instead, they were greeted by princes and people, alike exasperated by the extortions of the clergy, with enthusiasm. They were translated from the Latin in which Luther had written them into all the languages of western Europe, and within a month the young professor found himself an international figure.

But this attack on the indulgences, however it may have been received by the laity, did not arouse enthusiasm among the indulgence-sellers. Formal complaint was made to the pope against the professor, and the cry raised that, in attacking the indulgences, their author, the pope, was attacked. After a perfunctory examination of the case, Luther was ordered to retract. He refused, and appealed to a future general council of the Church to sustain his position.

Followers came to him from both clergy and laity. One of his fellow professors at Wittenberg engaged in a debate with an orthodox champion, and Luther was drawn into the controversy. The pope's supporter skillfully maneuvered Luther to the point where he admitted that he believed a general council of the Church could err.

By this admission Luther, in the view of the Church, undoubtedly proved himself a heretic. First, he had rejected the absolute authority of the pope; now he rejected that of the general councils. What room was there for one whose teaching ultimately came back to the authority of an individual's own spiritual experience, tested only by what that individual might discover in the Bible? A papal bull of condemnation was issued.

And Luther, to show his determination, publicly burned the bull!

* * * *

It was at this point in Luther's career that the diet of Worms was held. From that diet, as we have seen, Luther went out a proscribed and hunted man. But he also went out a German national hero. And that latter fact saved him for a long career.

We cannot take the space to trace here all that happened to Luther between 1521, when he left Worms, and 1546, when he died. We can remember, however, the first ten months of that period, when he was kept hidden in the Wartburg, one of the great castles of his protector, Frederic of Saxony, not far from the town of Eisenach. It was there that he translated the New Testament into German, thus laying the basis for all modern German literature. Yes, and it was there that he is said to have caught the very devil himself trying to tempt him, and hurled a bottle of ink at him. And if you doubt the story, the caretaker will show you the blot where the inkwell hit the wall. Luther must have used good ink; it hasn't faded a particle in four centuries!

Finally, his friends felt it safe for Luther to resume his teaching and preaching in Wittenberg. There he stayed for the rest of his life. At times, to be sure, he would hasten off to consult with this or that prince, or to meet with this or that council. But always he returned to Wittenberg.

There it was that he married. Luther, the former priest, married Catherine von Bora, a former nun, and the home that the two made has become one of the famous homes of history. Not only were there six of Luther's own children in that home, but a number of his orphaned nieces and nephews were brought in to share its hospitality. The place was always overrunning with guests, and the boy who had once made his way through college by street begging remembered that experience bitterly enough to see to it that there was always a company of poor students sharing his roof and his board.

It was a place of hilarity, that Luther home. As a young monk, Luther was a cadaverous fellow. But as an emancipated leader of a revolution, he gave himself heart and soul to the gladness of life. The emaciated figure rapidly filled out, until he became a great, robust, mountain of a man. Laughter reigned about the Luther table, and when the meals were done, the family would pass into the music room, where parents and children shared in a family orchestra. It was for these same children that some of Luther's most precious hymns were written, such as—

> "Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
> The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
> The stars in the heavens looked down where he lay,
> The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay."

Of course, life was not all song and sunshine. There was the serious work of teaching to be done in the university. There was the advice to be given to the other reformers and to the Churches and state officers who were constantly appealing for aid. There was the writing, some of it to answer the attacks which rained on the new movement, and some to attack abuses that the reformer thought needed correction.

Under the hand of Luther there grew up a great Church movement in Germany, refusing to recognize the authority of the pope. Eight years after the diet of Worms a number of the German princes who sympathized with this movement met to put their position in a formal statement. They called their declaration, "A Protest and Appeal." After that, they found themselves referred to as "The Protesting Estates." From that, it was not a long step to calling them the "Protestants."

Some of the decisions that Luther had to make in those troubled times seem to us to-day exceedingly unfortunate. Perhaps the one whose evil consequences have lasted longest was that by which he threw the weight of his influence against the peasants, at the time of their revolt in 1525.

The peasants of Germany in the sixteenth century were little better than serfs, and lived little better than animals. No wonder that when the teachings of Luther, striking so clearly the note of freedom, were carried to them they fell to dreaming of social and political, as well as religious, freedom. To give Luther credit, he at first recognized the justice of the peasants' demands. "The people neither can nor will endure your tyranny any longer," he told the nobles in 1523. "God will not endure it; the world is not what it once was when you drove and hunted men like wild beasts."

But when the peasants passed from simple argument to violent uprisings, then Luther changed his tone. He feared that the religious reformation which he had inaugurated would become mixed in the minds of the rulers of Germany with these peasant revolts. If that happened, he was afraid that both movements would be put down with equal rigor. So he cut himself entirely loose from the poor, and whereas he had once encouraged them in their demands for reform, he now encouraged the nobility to punish them with a savageness that is hard to believe.

Pick up the tract that he wrote "Against the Thievish, Murderous Hordes of Peasants," in which he exhorted the nobles to kill them like wild animals, and it is hard to convince yourself that it is a Christian minister who is writing. Alas, the nobles took Luther's advice all too literally. The peasants were killed by the tens of thousands. Naturally, those who survived lost faith in Luther. And thus Protestantism lost its best chance to become the faith of the disinherited of Europe.

As Luther grew older, his temper became shorter, more violent, more intolerant. In his later years he suffered from a nervous disease and from other painful maladies, partly due to the sedentary life he came to lead. Perhaps this can be blamed for much of the abusive language with which his later writings are crowded—language that a teamster would not use to-day. Yet, with all his roughness, with his imperiousness, and with the fits of melancholy which sometimes settled on him, he had a noble and memorable life, which he lived to the full. He died at sixty-three.

* * * *

Well then, you say, what sort of man was Martin Luther?

Obviously, the fundamental possession of his character was courage. He never hesitated to do what seemed to him right, "despite all cardinals, popes, kings, and emperors, together with all devils and hell." From the day when he nailed his ninety-five theses to the doors of the Wittenberg church to the day of his death, no man ever charged him with a lack of courage, although almost every other failing under the sun was alleged against him.

"What though this world, with devils filled,
   Should threaten to undo us?
We will not fear, for God hath willed
   His truth to triumph through us. . . . .
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also,
   The body they may kill,
   God's truth abideth still;
His kingdom is forever!"

So he sang, and so he lived. No braver man ever drew breath.

With his courage the man displayed an absolute sincerity. The one thing that he could not abide was hypocrisy. This was, in fact, the one sin which most aroused him against the papacy and the old religious order in general. It was the sight of men preaching one doctrine and living another that drove him to fury, goading him into writing those tearing, bitter, terrible outpourings of wrath that are still to-day almost too vituperative to read. There were times when the actions of Luther were less than politic, and there were other times when he was less than wise. But there were no times when he was not absolutely sincere.

His contemporaries were first made aware of Luther's importance by his eloquence. When the young monk mounted into the Wittenberg pulpit, something happened. When he set pen to paper to write his "Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," the words came hot, rushing, and infinitely moving. And as long as he lived, he retained the power to make words march or dance or sing or thrill or growl or thunder or threaten or woo, or do whatever he wished them to do. It was this preacher, this theological professor, who was the true father of modern German literature.

Strange contradictions constantly cropped out in the man's character. On the one hand, he was a true mystic, who could lose himself in the contemplation of those inner mysteries of the relation of the human soul to God which have occupied the meditations of many a cloistered saint. But he was equally a man of affairs, who could counsel the statesmen of his time, who could guide the Churches in their most perplexed hours, and who could make himself the most powerful single individual in his nation. He could show himself an opponent who scrupled at no fury when in battle with his enemies. Yet he could prove himself the gentlest of fathers, the adored playmate of little children. He could sink into profound melancholy; he could joke with those about him until the very house seemed to shout with laughter.

All in all, I suppose that means he was a *man*, a strong man, with a strong man's weaknesses and a strong man's powers. No man was ever more miscast than Luther as Brother Martin, the ascetic living in a monastic community. He was a man built for the open, for the storms of life. And the farther we get away from him, the larger his rugged figure bulks on history's horizon.

II

CROMWELL AND THE CONGREGATIONALISTS

II

CROMWELL AND THE CONGREGATIONALISTS

On the first day of May in the year 1638, His Gracious Majesty Charles the First having been for thirteen unlucky years King of England, Scotland, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and ruler of all British dominions beyond the seas, eight sailing ships slipped down the river Thames. The ships were a part of one of the most remarkable, most important migrations known to history. They bore Englishmen who, refusing to surrender their consciences in order to conform to the sort of worship which the royal and ecclesiastical authority had ordained for England, were ready to add themselves to the twenty thousand others of like independence who, in the twenty years following that first landing on Plymouth Rock, emigrated to New England. But before these eight ships had reached the river's mouth, their captains were ordered to heave to by the king's officers. A royal command intercepted the departure. The would-be emigrants returned to London. Later, there is reason to believe that Charles I had reason to regret his interference with that sailing. For among the men whom he thus prevented from leaving his realm were John Pym, John Hampden, and Oliver Cromwell.

I give this story as it has come down to us in a score of chronicles. It may have a foundation of fact, although I think that most of the recent historians have pronounced against its authenticity. But, whether this particular tale is true or not, there are some indisputable facts concerning religious events in England during the first sixty years or so of that seventeenth century that we must bear in mind if we are to understand the rise of one of the strongest branches of Protestantism now known to us—the Congregational churches. Whatever tale of separate adventures is or is not true, this much we know to have happened:

That during most of the years while Elizabeth was Queen of England, and during all the years while Scotch James the First, and his son Charles, were on the throne, any departure by minister or congregation from the established doctrines or forms of the state Church was bound to result in persecution;

That under the weight of this persecution, thousands fled to the New World, thousands went to jail, some went to the block or the gibbet, and thousands were driven into suspicion of and opposition to the Church of England;

That a great contest ensued, partly over political and partly over religious issues, culminating in civil war; out of which came a period of freedom of worship, in which all Protestant bodies were free to conduct themselves about as they pleased, being secure under the authority of a Great Protector.

It is the Great Protector of whom I write in this article concerning the men who have stood beside the cradles of the different churches. The Lord Protector, he was called by act of Parliament, because his country knew that after years of strife and loss, the honor and might of Britain were safe in his hands. But equally was he the protector of those who believed in freedom for the individual conscience in matters of faith. It is for that reason that I think of him as the father of Congregationalism.

To some it may seem a mistake thus to regard Oliver Cromwell. As a matter of cold historical fact, they will point out, Cromwell never had much to do with the actual government of churches, Congregational or otherwise. Certainly he was not the founder of the first Congregational Church. That honor is generally bestowed on Robert Browne, the Cambridge scholar who withdrew from the priesthood of the Church of England after publishing his "Treatise of Reformation without Tarying for anie." Why not write of Browne as the father of the Congregagational churches?

Well, chiefly for two reasons. In the first place, Browne was one of those almost accidental figures who are produced by events, rather than who produce them. He rises for a moment from the dead level of history at the close of the sixteenth century because he gave expression to an opinion that was forming in a multitude of minds. But even more, I choose Cromwell in preference to Browne because Cromwell dealt with the issues that mattered most; Browne with those of lesser ecclesiastical significance. The thing that was at stake when Charles I risked, and lost, his head was not so much the triumph of one theology over another. As far as theology was concerned, Calvin had won that battle years before. Neither was it a new idea to demand local government in congregations. The Baptists had fought for that for years. The thing that was at stake was, simply, freedom. And the fight to establish freedom was Cromwell's fight.

As it turned out, the men who turned England upside down in the long Parliament and on Marston Moor discovered that their freedom had to be won in the state before it could be secure in the Church. Nobody—not even John Milton—ever expressed this more clearly than did Cromwell himself. You will find the whole secret of the man's career, and of the service which he rendered the cause of liberty around the world, in his words:

"Of the two greatest concernments that God hath in the world, the one is that of religion and of the preservation of the professors of it; to give them all due and just liberty; and to assert the truth of God: the other thing cared for is the civic liberty and interests of the nation. Which, though it is, and I think it ought to be, subservient to the more peculiar interest of God, yet it is the next best God hath given man in the world; and if well cared for, it is better than any rock to fence men in their other interests."

So, as a man who believed himself ordained of God for the establishment of these two fundamental purposes of the Almighty, let us look at the career of Oliver Cromwell.

* * * *

"Paint me warts and all," growled the Protector to the obsequious court painter at work on his portrait. Historians have shown a complete readiness to take him at his word. Indeed, there have been many whose portrait, when completed, has seemed to be mostly warts. But as time passes, there is evident a growing appreciation of the fact that Cromwell was a great man, one of the greatest in human history.

Carlyle and Macaulay started the pendulum swinging away from the obloquy which had too long been heaped on Cromwell. Charles Dickens, little as he loved a Puritan, carried on the work of rehabilitation. Later critics have placed him even higher: Goldwin Smith holding him to be "about the greatest man that ever trod the scene of history"; John Morley speaking of him as one whose "name stands first, half warrior, half saint, in the calendar of English-speaking democracy."

To understand him, and the part he played in that restless England that writhed its way through the seventeenth century, we must begin by remembering that he was a man of the land. He had family connections with the nobility; you can even find tracings of his family tree to prove he was a ninth cousin of that Charles I whom he helped to decapitate. He had some background of leisure and culture; we know that he attended the University of Cambridge for a time, and there are rumors of some beginnings at the study of law in London. But fundamentally he was a farmer, a man of the land. Two-thirds of his life was spent in the obscurity of country villages, looking after the cultivation of his farms and the care of his herds and flocks. Never, as long as he lived, did he free himself from the manners and interests of a country gentleman. In that, he was English of the English.

Moreover, to understand him it must be remembered that he was a convinced Protestant at a time when men still felt that the right to their Protestantism had been won at a great price, and must be held at any cost. As we talk of Cromwell's devotion to the principle of religious toleration, we are forced to acknowledge that even his far-sighted vision never included toleration for Roman Catholics. (But before we are too hard on Cromwell about this, let us remember that it was not until 1829 that Catholics became eligible for public office in England.) We can more easily understand this if we recall that it was less than fifty years before Cromwell's birth when Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer were burned at the stake in the high street of Oxford. Only thirty-two years before Cromwell's birth Alva had let loose his wrath on the Netherlands. Only twenty-seven years before the Protestants of France had been slaughtered on St. Bartholomew's Eve. Cromwell was already five years old when Guy Fawkes planted his gunpowder to blow up a Protestant parliament. During most of the years of his career, the Protestants of the continent were defending their lives in the Thirty Years' War.

No man of intensity could live in such a period without arriving at profound religious convictions. Of Cromwell, Morley has well said that "the Biblical religion was the mainspring of his life." If you read the letters of the Protector, gathered with such indefatigible zeal by Carlyle, you are overwhelmed with the sense that, no matter what Cromwell was dealing with

—whether some high matter of state or some intimacy of that family to whom he gave his love so unstintedly—he never for a moment lost his devotion to the will of God. His words to the son whom he named to succeed him as ruler of England epitomize one principal aspect of his character: "Seek the Lord and his face continually; let this be the business of your life and strength, and let all things be subservient and in order to this."

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The man came into power suddenly. He had served in the Long Parliament, member for Cambridge, elected over his opponent by one vote. Some historians have surmised that English history would have been vastly changed had that one vote gone to Cromwell's opponent. But I doubt it. It was not in Parliament that Cromwell was to make his mark. His service there was always overshadowed by that of other men; men who had their contribution to make in the field of thought and debate as he had his to make in the field of action.

As a member of Parliament he seems to have impressed few. "I came into the House one morning," said the royalist Sir Philip Warwick in later days, "and perceived a gentleman speaking whom I knew not, very ordinarily apparelled; for it was a plain cloth suit, which seemed to have been made by an ill country tailor; his linen was plain, and not very clean; and I remember a speck or two of blood upon his little band, which was not much larger than his collar; his hat was without a hatband. His stature was of a good size; sword stuck close to his side; his countenance swollen and reddish; his voice sharp and untuneable. . . . I sincerely profess it lessened my reverence unto that great council, for he was very much hearkened unto."

But if Cromwell made slight impression on some observers, there were others in that famous House of Commons who had a keen sense of his worth. He was one of the intimates of John Pym—"King Pym," as he was called because of his parliamentary power. A cousin of John Hampden, Oliver Cromwell was also one of the trusted counselors of that great mind and spirit. Lord Digby, another royalist, walking with Hampden one day, inquired disdainfully who "that sloven," to whom Hampden had deferred, was. "That sloven," replied Hampden, "that sloven, I say, if we should ever come to a breach with the king, which God forbid!—in such a case, I say, that sloven will be the greatest man in England."

The breach between Parliament and the king came all too soon. There is no space here in which to outline the course of the long struggle by which Charles I sought the chance to govern as he conceived a king should. But he had the idea of divine right, the idea that a king could do no wrong, firmly implanted in his head. His French queen did nothing to lessen it, and his closest counselors—the Earl of Strafford and Archbishop Laud—encouraged him in his despotic notions. Charles felt that the only purpose for a Parliament was to vote such sums as the king might wish to spend; and he wished to spend a great deal. When Parliament set itself up to see that there were no forced loans extracted from his subjects in the king's name, no taxes imposed without its consent, no arrest or imprisonment without due process of law, and no more of a dozen other abuses which had flourished under royal prerogative, Charles felt himself reduced to puppetry. He had no intention of being a puppet.

Civil war broke out in 1642. By that time, Parliament had arrested and Charles had betrayed the great Earl of Strafford, who had gone to the block. Archbishop Laud, a sincere but narrow-minded ecclesiastic, who had tried to fasten on the Church of England an order almost indistinguishable from that of Rome, had been cast into the Tower. Then, suddenly, the king tried personally to arrest five of the leaders of the House of Commons—Pym and Hampden among them. When the city of London rallied to protect them, the king went to the north and raised his banner. Speaking generally, the north and west of England rallied to his support; the south and east were Parliament's.

Like most of the other members of Parliament who had power in their home counties, Oliver Cromwell, gentleman farmer, now forty-three years of age, left London at the king's challenge to raise a troop of horse from the yeomen of Huntingdonshire. In the early stages of the conflict, he played a minor part. But when Hampden died of a wound received in battle, and when Cromwell's cavalry, growing from one company to a regiment, and from a regiment to a brigade, proved the decisive factor in winning the battle of Marston Moor, this brooding, inarticulate, implacable man, who went into battle chanting psalms and came out of it to fall on his knees in prayers of thanksgiving, found himself the greatest captain in England.

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Cromwell's Ironsides! Was there ever another army like it? Invincible in battle, it was as strange a body on the march or in camp as ever history has known. No word of profanity was supposed to pass the lips of one of Cromwell's troopers. Or, if the word escaped, punishment befell. There was no looting, no roistering. The ranks teemed with preachers. The principal recreation in camp seems to have been listening to sermons. When the Cavaliers donned their bright plumes and drained their stirrup-cups to ride to their destruction at Naseby, they must have had some premonition of what was coming as they heard that deep chant in the morning mist:

> "Let God arise;
> Let his enemies be scattered."

Where did Cromwell recruit such an army? I might tell the story, pointing out the underlying religious issues that drove men into the Parliamentary army. But I think no description of the gathering of the Ironsides can ever equal Cromwell's own:

"I was a person," he says, "that, from my first employment, was suddenly preferred and lifted up from lesser trusts to greater, from my first being a captain of a troop of horse; and I did labor (as well as I could) to discharge my trust, and God helped me as it pleased Him, and I did truly and plainly, and then in a way of foolish simplicity (as it was judged by very great and wise men, and good men, too), desire to make my instruments to help me in this work; and I will deal plainly with you. I had a very worthy friend then, and he was a very noble person, and I know his memory is very grateful to all, Mr. John Hampden. At my first going out into this engagement, I saw their men were beaten at every hand; I did indeed, and desired him that he would make some additions to my

Lord Essex's army of some new regiments, and I told him I would be serviceable to him in bringing such men as I thought had a spirit that would do something in the work.

"This is very true that I tell you, God knows I lie not; 'Your troops,' said I, 'are most of them old decayed serving-men and tapsters, and such kind of fellows; and,' said I, 'their troops are gentlemen's sons, younger sons, and persons of quality; do you think that the spirit of such base and mean fellows will be ever able to encounter gentlemen that have honor and courage and resolution in them?' Truly, I presented him in this manner conscientiously, and truly did I tell him, 'You must get men of spirit. And take it not ill what I say (I know you will not), of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go, or else I am sure you will be beaten still;' I told him so, I did truly. He was a wise and worthy person, and he did think that I talked a good notion, but an impracticable one; truly I told him I could do somewhat in it; I did so; and truly I must need say that to you (impart it to what you please), I raised such men as had the fear of God before them, and made some conscience of what they did, and from that day forward, I must say to you, they were never beaten, and whenever they engaged against the enemy, they beat continually."

And another record of that same period tells the same story as an outsider saw it:

"At his first entrance into the wars, being but captain of horse, he had especial care to get religious men into his troop; these men were of greater understanding than common soldiers, and therefore were more apprehensive of the importance and consequences of the war. By this means, indeed, he sped better than he expected. Hereupon he got a commission to take some care of the associated counties; where he brought his troop into a double regiment of fourteen full troops, and all these as full of religious men as he could get; these, having more than ordinary wit and resolution, had more than ordinary success."

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This is not the place in which to try to tell the story of the battles of England's civil war. Marston Moor was the first great engagement, followed a year later by Naseby. In both cases, the impetuous opening charge of Prince Rupert burst through the Parliamentary center and seemed bound to sweep the field. In both cases Cromwell held his Ironsides steady on one flank until the decisive moment had fully developed. Then, loosing his thunderbolt, with his shout "God is with us!" he swept away the Cavaliers like chaff.

After the battle of Naseby Charles I was in the hands of his opponents. Seeking refuge among the Scots, those hardy Presbyterians turned him back a prisoner to Parliament. For more than three years he was under surveillance. Many of the Parliamentary party would have been glad had the king fled from the country; Cromwell probably among them. Others were apprehensive of what he might do if he gained the ear of the king of France, and so were anxious to keep him in England. But the army, after Charles had intrigued to raise an invasion of England by the Scotch, made up its mind that the king must be put out of the way. Accordingly, a parliament entirely under army domination voted the king's impeachment. He was tried before a special court, convicted, and beheaded. His noblest moments were those just before his death.

By this time, Pym and Hampden being dead, Cromwell was dominant both in the army and in Parliament. Many are the descriptions of him that have come to us from that period, some written by his supporters, some by those who hated or feared him. "His body," says one of the former, "was well compact and strong; his stature of the average height; his head so shaped as you might see in it both a storehouse and shop of a vast treasury of natural parts. His temper exceeding fiery; but the flame of it, kept down for the most part, is seen allayed with these moral endowments he had. He was naturally compassionate toward objects in distress, even to an effeminate measure; though God had made him a heart wherein was left little room for any fear but what was due to Himself, of which there was a large proportion, yet did he exceed in tenderness toward sufferers."

And here is another description, not so favorable:

"His gait clownish, his dress ill-made and slovenly, his manners coarse and abrupt, and face such as men look on with a vague feeling of admiration and dislike! The features cut, as it were, out of a piece of knarled and knotty oak; the nose large and red; the cheeks coarse, warted, wrinkled, and sallow; the eyebrows huge and shaggy, but, glistening from beneath them, eyes full of depth and meaning, and, when turned to the gaze, pierced through and through the gazer; above these, again, a noble forehead, whence, on either side, an open flow of hair 'round from his parted forelock manly hangs,' clustering; and over all, and pervading all, that undefinable aspect of greatness."

Followed then a period of terrible struggle. During it the Scots, by this time persuaded that England under Cromwell's guidance would no more establish Presbyterianism than it had been willing to remain under an established Anglicanism, espoused the cause of the eldest son of the beheaded king, and marched south to crown him. Cromwell tried to reason with the ministers who were the real power in Scotland. He did not attempt to meet them in theological disputation, but when they laid down the curious dogmatic grounds on which they were ready to put a Stuart back on the empty throne, he wrote, "I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, do believe that you may be mistaken." But the parsons were not open to persuasion. They goaded their followers into battle, apparently in overwhelming numbers. Cromwell, leading his Ironsides, went forward chanting the one hundred and seventeenth Psalm, and won at Dunbar the most amazing and complete victory of his career.

Even before that, he had brought Ireland under the authority of Parliament. He had done it with fire and sword, and with horrible butchery, for which there is no adequate explanation or mitigation. Cromwell's Irish campaign remains the blackest mark upon his memory. He had persuaded himself that nothing but ruthlessness would suffice to bring the restless island to obedience. So ruthless was he that to this day "The curse of Cromwell" is the most awful malediction which an Irishman knows to bestow upon his enemies.

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So at last, having lopped the head off a king and driven his son into exile, having established the power of the Parliament through all the British isles, it became inevitable that Cromwell should be made the head of the state. There are those who claim that he hoped at some day to be crowned, but for this there is no sufficient evidence. Parliament appointed him the Lord Protector of the realm, and he was content with that title, while he wielded a power exceeding that of any king of his time.

Throughout the period of his protectorate, Cromwell was the dominant figure in the international politics of Europe. The kings of France and of Spain were almost ludicrously eager to gain his favor; when he had decided to finish the job of disciplining Spain that Elizabeth had begun, his Admiral Blake did it in short order. Even the pirates of Algiers, who were still harrying the commerce of the western world when Commodore Decatur sailed into the harbor of Tripoli, were forced to sue for peace with Cromwell. Never, probably, has England's prestige abroad been higher than during the days when Cromwell held power.

But at home, while there was order, and while the country quickly began to recover from the ravages of the civil war, the Lord Protector had more than his share of trouble. Forthright man of action that he was, the interminable and meaningless debates of Parliament tore his nerves to shreds. Finally, he locked Parliament out of doors, put the key in his pocket, and went on governing in his own right. He was frequently in trouble over religion, especially with the extremists. Like many another soldier, he could see no particular virtue in trying to force all men to worship alike; let all worship as they pleased. But in a time when most men were persuaded that their way of worship was the only way that led to heaven, such tolerance was inveighed against on all sides. Some of the bitterest things ever written or said about Oliver Cromwell emanated from Puritan ministers.

Constantly, he walked in danger of assassination. Charles Stuart, living on the bounty of the King of France, had a standing and open offer of five hundred pounds and a title waiting for any man who would kill Cromwell.

Unflinchingly, however, he held his course. More and more he withdrew into himself. Here and there he found a few men on whose honesty and willingness to speak their true feelings he could rely. George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends, was one of them, and as Carlyle has said, there is no more arresting picture in English history than the Lord Protector and the man in the suit of leather confronting each other. But most men he learned to discount, to distrust. Sorrow came. His mother, whom he had kept at hand through all the hard years, died. His favorite daughter, after a lingering illness, passed away. And finally the gnarled champion, still less than sixty, but an old man nonetheless, fell on death.

The story of those last hours at Hampton Court helps to show him as he was. Men who saw in the Protector's passing the passing of all that Puritanism had fought for crowded the sick chamber, trying to force their God, through prayer, to prolong the sick man's life. But Cromwell had no illusions as to what was in store. Calling for his Bible, he asked for the reading of that great passage from the Epistle to the Philippians: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." Then, thinking of the son who had fallen on one of the early fields of the civil war, he said: "This Scripture did once save my life, when my eldest son, poor Oliver, died, which went as a dagger to my heart, indeed it did."

The days dragged on, Cromwell joining in prayer, and occasionally bursting forth in such ejaculations as, "I think I am the poorest wretch that lives; but I love God, or rather am beloved of God;" "I am a conqueror, and more than a conqueror, through Christ that strengtheneth me!" The evening of September 2, 1657, came. The next day would be the great holiday of the protectorate, the anniversary of the battles of Dunbar and of Worcester. The Protector felt that he should not live to share in another such festival. And so he turned to prayer:

"Lord, although I am a wretched and miserable creature, I am in covenant with Thee through grace, and I may, I will, come unto Thee for my people. Thou hast made me a mean instrument to do them some good, and Thee service; and many of them have set too high a value upon me, though others wish and would be glad of my death. But, Lord, however Thou dost dispose of me, continue to go on, and do good for them. Give them consistency of judgment, one heart, and mutual love; and go on to deliver them, and with the work of reformation, and make the name of Christ glorious in the world. Teach those who look too much upon Thy instruments to depend more upon Thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are Thy people too; and pardon the folly of this short prayer, for Jesus Christ His sake, and give us a good night if it be Thy pleasure."

He woke no more to this world.

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Two years later, Charles Stuart was back on the throne. Out of his sepulcher in Westminster Abbey, the corpse of Cromwell was dug, hauled to Tyburn, where it hung for a day, when it was beheaded. "Imagine," says Charles Dickens, "the head of Oliver Cromwell set upon a pole to be stared at by a brutal crowd, not one of whom would have dared to look the living Cromwell in the face for half a moment! Think, after you have read this reign, what England was under Oliver Cromwell who was torn out of his grave, and what it was under this Merry Monarch who sold it like a merry Judas, over and over again."

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And what, perhaps you ask, has all this to do with religion? And I must answer, Everything.

Why England's civil war? Because taxes were too heavy; because the king would not govern according to the law; because the lives of subjects were insecure; because the word of Charles could not be trusted. Yes, these were contributing causes. But beneath them all there was another cause—religion.

Charles meant to make England an autocracy. He, as well as his father before him, saw in an autocratic church, governed by bishops whose ghostly powers put them beyond questioning, the main bulwark of an autocratic state. "No bishop; no king," James I was never tired of repeating.

The commons of England had no intention of submitting to an autocracy. When they found that the episcopally-governed state Church (with the bishops appointed by the king) was the principal agent in forwarding the royal reaction, they rose against the Church. At one time, they hoped to purify the Church from within. Hence the term, Puritan. But when that failed, there arose those Separatist or Independent congregations, which were the forebears of our modern Congregationalism.

Cromwell is incomprehensible apart from his religious fervor. His religion was, it is true, of an Old Testament sort. It was "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon" that he wielded. His Jehovah was a mighty man of war; his God was a god of battles. But his God was also a God who lifted up His arm in order that His worshipers might be free. When Cromwell struck at the despotism of the king, he struck equally at all despotisms, and particularly at the despotisms of popes, bishops, presbyters, and all ecclesiastical overlords by whatever name they might be called.

"In the Cromwellian period," says John Morley, "it was found that . . . two new principles had struggled into recognized life on English soil—the principle of toleration, and the principle of free or voluntary churches." Many a Puritan was as fearful of both those principles as Archbishop Laud. But Cromwell never deviated from them. Not only was he himself an Independent, but in the England over which he ruled there was found room, at the time of his death, for 170 different creeds of Puritanism.

This may seem like freedom gone mad. To-day we seek not diversity but unity. But Cromwell came at a time when men had first to assert and win their liberty. It is only a unity that is a unity of choice, from which compulsion has been banished, that can represent the unity of the kingdom of God. And for the winning of this initial, prerequisite freedom, this freedom of which the Congregational churches have always remained the resolute defenders, Oliver Cromwell stood up out of the farmsteads of England, rough and implacable, a champion not to be denied.

III

JOHN KNOX: FATHER OF PRESBYTERIANISM

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JOHN KNOX: FATHER OF PRESBYTERIANISM

THE man's name was Knox—plain John Knox. Everything about him was as plain as his name. His robe was the plain black gown which had been adopted by the reforming preachers of Geneva. His presence was the plain but self-respecting dignity of the bra' Scot who trembles before neither man nor devil. His speech was plain—painfully plain, it seemed to many of those who, willy-nilly, had to listen.

Where had he come from? It was hard to say. Some said he had been born at Haddington; some said at Morham. Nobody was sure. It was somewhere within easy reach of Edinburgh; that was all that could be said with certainty. How old was he? Nobody knew. Some said he had been born in 1505; some said in 1513. What difference did eight years make? What was his family? Who could tell? Simple folk. God-fearing. But lost in the great mass of Scotland's commoners.

There was something mysterious about the man's origins, like the mystery that surrounded the early days of the ancient Hebrew prophets. Where had Elijah come from? Or Amos? Or

John the Baptist? Men only knew that, in desperate hours, a sudden voice had spoken out, and with the speaking sent a thrill of new spiritual energy across the land. So in Scotland, in the dark days when that gnarled and ancient kingdom found itself being ground between the giant millstones of France and England, in the days when the Lords of the Congregation must defend their faith with their lives, this new voice had spoken out. And almost from the hour of his first speaking, all Scotland had listened to John Knox.

There he stood, minister of the famous cathedral church of St. Giles in Edinburgh; uncrowned master of Scotland. The proudest nobles in the country turned to him for advice. Parliament enacted the statutes which he called for. Even the social lines that are raised against the sons of commoners had been lowered; his wife was the daughter of proud Lord Stewart of Ochiltree.

One enemy had never surrendered. No man ever faced a more subtle, more relentless, more powerful foe than Knox confronted in Mary Stuart, queen of Scotland, dowager queen of France, and claimant to the throne of England. Reputed to be the most beautiful woman of her time, and certainly one of the most gifted, Mary had instantly sensed the threat which this man's preaching held against her power. For a time she had perhaps dreamed of cajoling him into supporting her. But when flattery failed, she had other weapons. For twelve years, Scottish history had been, in essence, a struggle to see whether Scotland should be ruled by Queen Mary or the minister of St. Giles.

Knox had won. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Mary had lost. For had the queen been content to govern her realm in accord with the agreements which she had made with her nobles when she returned from France, the minister might have pounded the pulpit of St. Giles as often and as loud as he pleased, denouncing the frivolities of the court at Holyrood, and still the reign of Mary would have gone on. But the beautiful queen seemed doomed to do the wrong thing in every time of crisis. Perhaps the very implacability of Knox frenzied her, drove her to her blunders. Once started making mistakes, she plunged from one into another. Finally, to protect themselves and to satisfy an outraged public conscience, the lords of Scotland forced her abdication. She left her infant son, crowned king, in the hands of a regent who was himself in the hands of Knox. She fled to England; to the mercy of Elizabeth; to the headsman's axe.

John Knox was left to rule Scotland, to the glory of God and the establishment of the Presbyterian Church.

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Some day, let us hope, a movie magnate, seeking for a scenario more thrilling than any concocted by the fiction writers of the screen, will have imagination enough to see the possibilities in the career of Knox. List the requirements of the successful films—adventure, suspense, struggle, humor, tragedy, the sex element, and final victory snatched out of the jaws of defeat—and you can find every one present in heaping measure in the life of Scotland's great reformer.

Here, without hope of any royalty from the picture makers, is a quick list of the principal scenes in such a story:

We would see, first of all, the gaunt, gawky, coarsely clad young lowlander coming to the gates of one of the proud Scotch universities—the chances are that it was Glasgow—seeking the education which is already the highest desire of Scotland's youth. But he does not stay there long. Perhaps his poverty makes it impossible. He leaves the university to enter the priesthood of the ancient Church.

It is a troubled time. New ideas have shaken the Church in Europe. A Luther, a Zwingli, a Calvin have set afoot movements which men already speak of as a reformation. These ideas have crossed the narrow seas between the continent and the British isles; they have even penetrated into wild, untamed, some say half-civilized Scotland. The young priest meets an older priest, Wishart. This man has studied the new teaching in Germany and in Switzerland. He has won fame as a teacher in England's Cambridge university. But he has come back to Scotland, intent that the new truths shall be given to his own countrymen. The young priest hears, believes, follows.

Then, swiftly, the picture builds toward catastrophe. The ancient Church is aroused. The churches close their doors to the reforming preachers. Barred from the pulpits, Wishart takes to the fields. Knox stands at his side. A band of hardy, resolute men surround him. But the great Cardinal Beaton shows his power. Wishart is captured, convicted of heresy, burned at the stake. Three months later, the cardinal is assassinated.

Now, for the first time, the power of the crown becomes involved in the struggle. The ruler of Scotland is a four-year-old baby girl—the ill-fated queen of whom more hereafter—but the power of the throne is in the hands of the Queen Regent, that Mary of Guise whose grandfather had turned Catholic as he mounted the throne of France, laughingly murmuring that saying a mass was a small price to pay for Paris. Mary of Guise is a determined Catholic, and a still more determined champion of an unlimited monarchy. In the murder of her most intimate adviser, Cardinal Beaton, she sees a direct challenge to the safety of the throne.

It is to the land of her birth that the Queen Regent appeals. French troops are quickly supplied to hunt down the reformers who have defied the throne and killed the cardinal. These bold men, knowing that their lives are at stake, fling themselves into the castle of St. Andrews, and prepare to sell their lives as dearly as possible. John Knox is among them. Chief disciple of the martyred Wishart, he is now chief chaplain of the beleaguered garrison.

The castle falls. Most of the defenders are slain; the rest are taken into captivity. And now for nineteen months John Knox is a galley slave. What could the movie director not do with those nineteen months—the fiery young preacher chained to his oar; his thoughts as the lash of his French captors fell upon his shoulders, or as he listened of necessity while the chaplain priests celebrated their masses on shipboard; the dull hopelessness of the days passed in prison in Nantes.

Suddenly, freedom. England has a Protestant king, the young Edward VI, who asks for the release of many of the Protestant prisoners in French hands. For diplomatic reasons, the French comply with the request, and John Knox finds himself in England, able to take up again his beloved preaching. The shift from the galleys to power is intensely dramatic in its suddenness. Almost overnight, the young Scot who has been in chains finds himself a chaplain to the king, the intimate of Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, and the other leaders of the English Reformation. He even has a large part in the writing of a new English prayer book.

Five years of power in England and then again, without warning, Knox is fleeing for his life. The young king dies. He is succeeded by his half-sister, Mary, a fierce Catholic, whose proscriptions and persecutions have gained for her the sobriquet of "Bloody Mary." But Knox finds refuge in Switzerland and Germany.

It is at Geneva that the Scotch reformer meets Calvin, and comes under his sway. There he obtains the theological opinions which he is to hold tenaciously for the rest of his life; there, more important, he obtains the ideas of a proper form of Church and state government with which he is to remake Scotland. From this time, the reformation in Scotland is largely the mind of John Calvin working itself out through the relentless energy of John Knox.

Three years Knox stays with Calvin in Geneva; probably the happiest years of his life. Then word comes to him that the political situation in Scotland has completely changed. The nobles have banded together against the throne, and for their mutual protection. They have forced the Queen Regent to grant many concessions; others must plainly follow. Knox feels that the moment for action has arrived. Bidding farewell to Geneva, he returns to his homeland for the crowning years of his life.

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It is simply impossible to overdraw the picture of what happened when John Knox began to preach in Scotland after his return from Geneva. Here was a country already aroused. All the materials for an explosion had been gathered; loose gunpowder was lying about everywhere; it needed only some single firebrand to supply the detonating spark. Knox was that firebrand. From the day he began to preach, lashing the forms of worship of the Roman Church as idolatry and the work of the devil, Scotland was in an uproar.

Wild mobs roared up and down the streets of Perth, St. Andrews, Stirling, and other towns, tearing the statues of saints from their niches in the churches; sacking the monasteries. Priests fled. Knox opposed these excesses; he called the rioters the "rascal multitude." But the crowds were beyond control. Besides, the religious issue had become hopelessly mixed up with the political issue. The Queen Regent was a Catholic; Scotland was as much up in arms against the Queen Regent as against the ancient Church.

A partial, but important, victory came to Knox and the Protestants in less than a year. The Queen Regent died. With her death, the Catholics lost their last chance to withstand the Protestant onslaught. A Scotch Parliament met; the old Church was disestablished; in its place there was put a reformed Church, patterned on the model Knox had brought back with him from Geneva. This new Church acknowledged no papal authority, and no bishops. It was ruled by its own elders, or presbyters, as the older Greek word had it. And because it was the Church ruled by presbyters, it soon came to be known as the Presbyterian kirk.

But then, with the new kirk established, Knox had to face the great antagonist of his life. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the young queen who came to claim her throne at this time found in Knox the great antagonist of her life. For certainly Mary gave every indication of being willing to let Knox alone, but Knox had no intention of leaving her alone. He did not trust her for an instant, and he took great pains to tell her so.

There are some dramatic pictures from that period, but none, I think, surpasses in intensity the picture which Knox has himself drawn of his interviews with Mary. There she was, young, beautiful, brilliant, and obviously using every feminine art to dazzle and overwhelm the reformer. And there he was, grizzled, roughmaned, uncouth, pitting his prophetic zeal against his queen's personal charm.

It is impossible, even when reading Knox's own account of his interviews with the queen, not to feel sorry for her. She was still a girl in years, only eighteen. She had been queen of Scotland since she was less than a week old, but all her life had been spent in the vicious French court where, for a single year, she had reigned as the queen of the short-lived Francis II. She liked gayety, laughter. She had to deal with a man who was entirely without tact, and who showed in every move and sentence that he despised her. No wonder that she was reduced, at times, to tears; "so many tears," Knox says, "that her chamber boy could scarce get napkins enough to dry her eyes."

I presume that there is no better indication of the character of John Knox than the recollection that his first remark when meeting the sovereign whose conduct might make or ruin all the work of his life was that he regarded living under her reign as Paul must have regarded living under that of Nero! And when, after he had followed that introduction with a resounding sermon on the right of men to look to God rather than to princes for authority, Mary ventured to ask whether he thought the authority of rulers might be resisted, Knox instantly thundered: "If princes exceed their bounds, madam, they may be resisted and even deposed." Is it to be wondered at that the interviews did not bring the two participants to an understanding?

Knox's idea of an interview seems queer when one thinks of the usual way in which subjects are expected to approach their sovereigns. An interview, with him, was really a sermon, delivered with all the fire and brimstone that he used when in the pulpit of St. Giles, but pounded home, point by point, while the girl queen sat there, wondering how long it would last, and waiting for her turn to make a few answering remarks, or raise a few questions, at the close. We must have those interviews in our scenario, for they were really the most colorful episodes in Knox's life. But to do them justice we shall have to rely on the talking pictures.

The break between Mary and the reformer came when he dared to advise her as to her marriage. It was taken for granted that this charming widowed queen in her teens would marry somebody, and much of the political intrigue of the period had to do with picking the proper groom. Mary had her own ideas on the subject, as she showed when she married her own cousin, Lord Darnley. But Knox did not hesitate, before that bethrothal was announced, to tell her what her course should be.

That was too much for the queen. Not only was she a Stuart, whose sons and grandsons and great-grandsons were to occupy the throne of England, but she was a daughter of the Guises and the Bourbons, upon whose own brow two crowns had already rested. "What have you to do with my marriage?" she cried. "Or what are you within this commonwealth?" And then came the answer that seems to me to have been, in a sense, the highest point in Knox's career. For the son of peasants met her challenge instantly: "A subject born within the same," he told her; "and though neither earl, lord, nor baron, God has made me a profitable member."

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And now our scenario must speed to its close. Unable to win over Knox to her side, Mary concentrates her arts on the Protestant nobility, and with considerable success. Although she retained her own private practice of Catholic rites—to the accompaniment of Knox's constant denunciation from the pulpit of St. Giles—the queen persuaded many of the most powerful nobles that she had no intention of interfering with the newly established reformed religion of the realm. These men were so sure that Knox had gone too far in his opposition to the queen that he was forced to give up preaching in Edinburgh, and retire into comparative privacy.

Then, by a series of incredible blunders, Mary threw away all the advantage she had gained. Her marriage with Darnley was followed by sordid intrigue, first with her Italian secretary (which led to his murder), and later with the libertine Earl of Bothwell. Darnley was murdered under circumstances which pointed toward Bothwell and Mary. When the two were married soon thereafter, Knox came forth preaching a new crusade. In the name of common morality, he roused Scotland to such a pitch that the nobles forced the queen to abdicate, placing her infant son upon the throne.

It would be hard to make the closing years of Knox's life very exciting on the screen. There were times when he was at outs with the Scotch nobles; there were times when he was at outs with the general assembly of the Scotch Church. His great supporter, the Earl of Moray, was assassinated; Knox himself lived in fear of assassination for considerable periods. But on the whole, he held an almost undisputed grip on Scotland from the day when Mary fled the country until the day, five years later, when he died.

To the very end, the fire burned within him. Staying at St. Andrews because his life was not safe in Edinburgh, sick, burdened with many cares, he yet managed to ascend the pulpit of the parish church where he had begun his ministry. It required a servant to hold him up to begin to preach. But the famous record tells us that "ere he was done with his sermon, he was so active and vigorous that he was lyke to ding the pulpit in blads and flie out of it." Preaching, with John Knox, was always a case of dinging the pulpit in blads.

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I have been talking of John Knox as the father of Presbyterianism. Of course, I know that many will hold that the choice should have been given to his great master, John Calvin. There would be much to justify such a choice. John Calvin was undeniably the intellectual father of Presbyterianism. Moreover, he actually worked out at Geneva those fundamental principles of Church organization and rule that still distinguish the many Presbyterian bodies scattered throughout the world. And in addition to all that, the young graduate of the University of Paris, who rocked the world with his books before he was thirty years of age, would make an ideal subject for such a series of sketches as these.

The choice has fallen on Knox, however, and that for a very simple reason. Calvin gave first expression to the distinctive tenets of Presbyterianism. But John Knox brought those ideas to Scotland. He established them in control of that land. And it was from Scotland that the American Presbyterian Churches we know had their origin. Indeed, if you attend a session of the Presbyterian General Assembly to-day, you will still hear the "ruling elders," as they take the floor, rolling their "r's" and talking of covenants and kirks as though it was only yesterday they left Clydeside or the fastnesses of the highlands.

I presume that there are many Christians who find it hard to warm up to the character of John Knox. Knox himself was not noted for his affability. When he warmed up, it was for the purpose of putting somebody to sizzling over the fire of his wrath. Thus, there was a time when it suddenly struck him that there were too many women rulers on the horizon, and that all of them were doing everything they could to restore the authority of the pope, whom he was sure was the anti-Christ. So Knox wrote a pamphlet to which he gave the title, "First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women." Later, there came another woman, Elizabeth, to the English throne, with whom the Scotch reformers felt the need of keeping on good terms. But Elizabeth, remembering the Knox pamphlet, proved coy. So Knox was induced to write her in apology. His apology, when written, turned out to be an excoriation of her for having "declined from God and bowed to idolatry." That was Knox's way of warming up, even with England's greatest queen.

There were many other things that could be said against the man. He was hopelessly one-sided. He believed that he was on the side of God. So it followed that any who opposed him were on the side of the devil. Why, therefore, should he try to understand the other side? Nobody in those days saw much virtue in the cultivation of what we call a judicial temperament; John Knox less than anyone.

Because of this one-sidedness, he was terribly violent in all his ways of going about things. At the very start of his career as a Protestant, as a follower of Wishart, he made it a practice, he tells us, to bear before him a "twa-handed sword." He never seems to have let go his grip on that weapon, except when there came times when a sword—even a two-handed sword—hardly seemed up to the requirements of the situation, in which case he would use a battle-ax, a sledge hammer, or any other implement that fell handy. Whether preaching or in counsel, he never seemed to have any other method than that of beating people over the head. His sermons were generally a prolonged blast of denunciation, and why he should have been surprised when they roused the rabble to go out looting and burning it is hard to imagine.

There was considerable humor in his life, but it was a humor of which he was totally unconscious. If there grew up, not only in Presbyterianism but in Protestantism generally, a conception of the saint as a man who never lost sight of the seriousness of life, and of the ministry as the most funereal of callings, John Knox contributed much to that idea. Scotch church services are not to be taken lightly, even to-day. In Knox's day, a smile was almost equivalent to confession of sin. Knox always thundered; he never smiled. One cannot resist the feeling that it was more because of her love of laughter than of her love of the pope that Knox fought Mary so relentlessly.

Yet, admitting all these shortcomings—and I regard them as genuine shortcomings, in that day as well as in this—the man compels admiration. There was granite in him. He was hard; he was harsh; he was bitter. But he was unswerving, incorruptible, true. He had no tact, but by that token he was incapable of those politic compromises by which immediate situations are saved and ultimate causes lost. In a time when too many allowed their opinions to be made by the prince who happened to be reigning, it was truly said of him that he "never feared nor flattered any flesh." From the day when, at Geneva, there came to him his vision of the Scotland that might be, he never swerved by an inch from the path by which he set out to achieve his aim.

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It is for this goal toward which he strove, rather than for any means by which he sought to reach it, that John Knox most deserves to be remembered. When he became the disciple of Calvin at Geneva, Knox found under way there the first actual attempt ever made to govern a city fully in accord with the will of God. Calvin and his associates were quite sincere in their expectation of setting up the City of God within the corporation limits of the Swiss municipality. They made some mistakes—some rather large mistakes—in achieving that end. Of course, they never did achieve that end. But they made the effort, and they carried it forward more determinedly than the world had ever seen men carry it forward before.

John Knox, finding refuge in Geneva, found the government which Calvin had instituted there as near perfection as his mind could conceive. As he watched its functioning, the question which grew within his mind was, "If a city can be governed for God, why not a kingdom? If Geneva, why not Scotland?" And it was to make Scotland the first realm of the kingdom of God, come among men, that Knox left the safety of Geneva and threw himself into the terrible struggle in his homeland. The parliament, as he sanctioned it, the Church as he organized it, had but one mission—to bring Scotland under the rule of God.

He made mistakes. He was not as infallible an interpreter of the will of God as he thought. But his mistakes are hardly to be remembered in the light of the tremendous things which he accomplished. From one of the rudest states in Europe, he set Scotland on the road to becoming one of the most cultured kingdoms known to history. In the place of a Church that had sunk into a dead formalism, he raised up a Church that has given stamina to a whole people, while it has proved the prolific source of new spiritual life on every other continent.

John Knox was the first leader of the Reformation Churches to believe, in a national sense, that the kingdom can actually be set up among men. Because he saw that vision, and set out to achieve it, he is entitled to honor to-day, not only as the father of a great branch of Protestantism, but as the father of all those who will not be content until the rule of God embraces all the affairs of men.

IV

JOHN BUNYAN AND THE BAPTISTS

IV

JOHN BUNYAN AND THE BAPTISTS

WHO was the founder of the Baptist Church? If there were a map of the world that colored its regions according to the religious beliefs of the inhabitants, you would find the presence of Baptists shown on every continent and in almost every country. In Russia, where the government is avowedly atheist and where all sorts of difficulties are placed in the way of the practice of any religion, there are Baptists. In Roumania and in Italy, where state churches have their ways of making it hard for congregations of another order, there are Baptists. In the forests of equatorial Africa, where the voodoo man raises his incantations, there are Baptists. Along the borders of forbidden Tibet, there are Baptists. Go where you will, and you will not have to search long before you find men and women worshiping God according to the ideas and practices of this great branch of the Christian Church. Who, then, it is natural to ask, gave birth to the Baptist movement?

As we consider the history of other great communions, it is not hard to pick out the great figures who have led in their formation. But when we turn to this great body of Christians—

in point of size perhaps the largest body of Protestants in the world—it is practically impossible to point to any one man, or to any single company of men, and give them the honor of origination. For the Baptists came into existence much more as the result of a conviction that grew into action in the lives of many men than as an effect of the preaching or work of any one man. It is hard to say when or where the Baptists were born; like Topsy, they "just growed."

At a banquet in London this spring, Premier Baldwin gave this picture of the Baptists: "You stand, as you stood from the earliest day, for the completest independence of the human soul. That is to say, you recognize that wherever two or three are gathered together, the Spirit of Christ is amongst them, and they, in the presence of that Spirit, constitute a church. It is in personal communion that the individual receives the light which he needs, and that being so, you have no need of a priesthood, no need of specific tests through creeds: in other words, the responsibility and the right of every man to pray and to worship as he chooses." Although Mr. Baldwin is not a Baptist, I am sure that most Baptists would accept this as a very good picture of the ideas which lie at the foundation of the whole Baptist fellowship.

Yet in this picture of how a Baptist "gets that way," it is not hard to find the reason why there will never be any one man picked out as the father of the Baptist churches. As Mr. Baldwin says, this movement resulted from the stirring of the souls of individuals, countless individuals. For the most part these individuals were very humble, inconspicuous, quiet men and women, who were content to go about their work (for most of them were day laborers) without bothering others, and who wished in turn to live without being molested. A majority of the early Baptists of continental Europe were peasants; the terrible "Peasants' Revolt" which the princes who supported Luther put down with such butchery was, in the main, a Baptist movement. In the beginning, therefore, the Baptist congregations were like that church in Corinth described by St. Paul. There were "not many wise men, not many leading men, not many of good birth" in it. But the sum total of the convictions and devotion of all this multitude of human folk was this mighty movement that still influences the course of human history.

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The story of the birth of the Baptists is usually told in some such fashion as this: Some time after the Protestant Reformation, under Luther, had established itself in parts of Germany, Switzerland, and Holland, there grew up "praying circles" of devout people, who gradually drifted away from all the Churches, whether Roman or

Protestant, and finally came to believe in the baptism of adults who had experienced conversion as the only proper method of entrance into the organized fellowship of Christian believers. These people had all, as children, been baptized in the churches, but they now felt it necessary, as repentant adults, to be baptized over again. For this reason their neighbors called them the Anabaptists, which means the "re-baptized."

The Anabaptists grew vigorously for a while in Germany, but fell under the displeasure of all authorities, both civil and state, Protestant and Catholic, because of their insistence on individual freedom of conscience to follow whatever line of conduct any reader believed to be commanded by the Bible, and because they refused to have any part in the life of the civil state. Charges of all kinds were made against them, and they were frequently persecuted with hideous cruelty, godly men and gentle women suffering martyrdom by methods whose cruelty surpassed those of the Spanish Inquisition.

Early in the seventeenth century one of the Puritan parsons of the Church of England who found himself in trouble with the regulations by which that Church was being conducted under King James the First, fled to Amsterdam, taking his little congregation with him. These refugees came from the town of Gainsborough. They found such a happy refuge in Holland that some of their friends, who lived in the neighboring village of Scrooby, were induced to follow them. The Scrooby congregation and the Gainsborough congregation tried to settle down in Holland, but there was something about the ways of the Dutch that did not quite fit in with the aggressive temper of many of the Englishmen. So a part of the Scrooby congregation chartered a little vessel, the "Mayflower," and sailed for Virginia, and we know what came of *that*. And a part of the Gainsborough congregation drifted back across the channel to London, and we are about to see what came of that.

While in Amsterdam this exiled English congregation had learned, and adopted, a concise set of principles. One of the great encyclopedias summarizes these principles in this fashion:

"They held that loyalty to Christ and his teachings is the supreme duty of Christians; that these teachings are contained in the Scriptures, which are thus the sole and authoritative rule of faith and practice; that the religion of Christ is spiritual, and none can enter the kingdom of heaven, or should enter the Church on earth, unless he has been born anew of the Spirit of God; that only those should be baptized, therefore, who make personal profession of faith in Christ and give credible evidence of regeneration; that a true Christian Church is the fellowship of such baptized believers; that each Church has Christ as sole Head and Lawgiver; that no secular power should interfere with the spiritual interests of any believer or of any Church."

It was 1611 when the home-hungry Puritans of Gainsborough brought their Church, holding these ideas, from Amsterdam back to London. That was the year, you will remember, when the King James Version of the Bible was completed. And these people professed to base all their beliefs and all their practices on that Bible. However, there was scant welcome waiting for them in England. For their principles, it was clear, were Anabaptist. And while Englishmen soon dropped the "Ana" part of the title, and called them just Baptists, there was no more room in England, in the days of King James, for Baptists than for any other kind of people whose worship seemed to cast reflection on the sacredness of the State Church which the king himself headed. But while the Baptists were subjected to various troubles, they seem to have thriven on opposition. Within a century there were Baptist Churches all over England.

But the interesting thing to note, so far as our purpose is concerned, is that there did not arise out of all this record—the flight to Holland, the exile there, the return to London, and the spreading of Baptist Churches through England—a single man who can be truly called the founder of the Baptists. The name of the rector who led them to Holland was John Smyth. But he withdrew from the congregation there, passing into the Mennonite movement. The names of the two men who led the return to England were Thomas Helwys and John Murton. Did you ever hear of either one before? No, there is no man who can properly be studied as the father of this great denomination.

Yet this is no great loss. For in the place of some single "founder," it is possible to pick out of the story of those times the figure of one man who completely personifies the whole movement. He had not yet been born when that original Baptist congregation located in London. But he came into the Baptist fellowship before it had gained a real foothold for itself in the national life of England; he experienced all the ups and downs that befell the movement during those tempestuous days; before he died he had come to typify the whole communion to such an extent that he was known everywhere as "the Baptist bishop." And it is therefore of John Bunyan as the great father and saint of the Baptist Churches that I write.

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It is impossible to escape the influence of Bunyan. Kipling knew this when he wrote:

"The craft that we call modern,
The crimes that we call new,

John Bunyan had 'em typed and filed
In Sixteen Eighty-two."

Except for the Bible, no other book has made its way into as many languages as "Pilgrim's Progress." There are no other characters in English literature so instantly recognized as Mr. Worldly Wiseman, Mr. Facing-Both-Ways, Mr. Pliable, Mr. Valiant-for-Truth. There are no places so well fixed in the geography of the English mind as the wicket gate, the slough of despond, the interpreter's house. And these characters survive, these places are familiar, because John Bunyan, their creator, wrote a universal language, based on universal experience, knowing nothing of century or country.

When one thinks of Bunyan's background, the marvel of his universality appears. His father was a tinker, a craft that Bunyan himself called "the meanest and most despised of all the families of the land." Perhaps that was not literally true, but the home of the Elstow tinker was bound to be a struggling and circumscribed home. There was none of the outlook that comes from personal ambition. The Bunyans had been tinkers for generations; they expected to go right on being tinkers. Indeed, they did so. For not only did John Bunyan succeed his father in the mending of pots and kettles, but John Bunyan's son, despite the fame that came to his father, took over the business in due course, and lived and died a tinker in Bedford.

The boy had little schooling of a formal sort. He lived in a community that had few interests outside its own borders. Moreover, he lived in a period of bitter and narrow partisanship, of which he himself was one of the most persecuted victims. Yet out of this environment John Bunyan arose to demonstrate his familiarity with the problems, the struggles, the defeats, the victories that come to men of every color and in every clime! Long ago it was said that there is no accounting for genius, and there could be no clearer proof of the truth of that statement than the career of this man.

Reviewing Bunyan's life, there are only two things that need to be remembered from the period of his youth. The first is that it fell during that critical period when the Parliament, whose armies were led by Cromwell, was settling with the king who should be the real ruler of England. Bunyan himself, as a boy of nearly seventeen, was drafted into the parliamentary army, and saw service for a year. His military experience seems to have made little impression on him, although there are military terms used in his "Holy War" that show his familiarity with camps and campaigns. The second fact that had importance in the light of after events was the deep interest in religious matters which the boy showed almost from the start. Bunyan later came to write of his youth as though it had been spent in dreadful sin. The truth seems to be that, at least by the time he was nine years old, he had shown signs of unusual religious insight. Saints are apt to look back on youth in that way; even St. Paul thought that his youth had been that of the "chief of sinners."

Bunyan came home at the close of England's civil war to find the country in the firm grip of Puritanism. Men were honestly seeking to govern the nation in accordance with the law of God, and to make each city and town an earthly replica of the New Jerusalem. Religion was the principal topic of conversation, sermons the principal printed matter. The movement had its excesses (as what movement does not?) and it showed no great wisdom in many of the ends it adopted. But it made a great nation of England; the most respected nation in Europe. And it had its part in producing some great men, of whom John Bunyan was not the least.

Young Bunyan, back at his forge, not yet eighteen, was not quite ready for the wholesale piety that seemed to have settled down on Bedford. As has happened many a time under similar circumstances, he reacted violently in the opposite direction. He became, he assures us, the champion cusser of the whole region. But the "earnest" atmosphere of the place and times would not let him alone. He came under what our fathers called conviction of sin. He lived for years in agony of soul—agony so terrible that it drove him out into the fields, into the night, away from every other living being, where he battled with Satan for his soul as his Christian later battled with Apollyon.

Then finally, suddenly, there came peace. There are no better words with which to tell of the experience than his own: "One day as I was passing into the field, and that too with some dashes on my conscience, fearing lest yet all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, 'Thy righteousness is in heaven.'" Then he goes on to tell how the chains that bound him fell off: "I went home rejoicing for the grace and love of God. Christ of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption. I now lived very sweetly, at peace with God through Christ. Oh, merciful Christ! Christ! There was nothing but Christ before my eyes."

The whole career of Bunyan from this time to his death, thirty-three years later, can be compressed in one or two paragraphs. Immediately after his conversion, the young tinker was immersed and joined the Baptist Church in Bedford. There he soon showed such remarkable power in prayer and in testimony that the congregation insisted on his assuming the duties of preacher. He preached for five years, soldering pans in the daytime, saving souls at night. Then, in 1660, Oliver Cromwell having died, Charles the Second having been restored, and the Puritan régime having been brought to an end, Bunyan was arrested as a dissenting preacher. The technical charge against him was that he had "devilishly and pertinaciously abstained from coming to church (that is, of course, to the Established church) to hear divine service, and was a common upholder of unlawful meetings and conventicles to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of the kingdom, contrary to the laws of our Sovereign Lord, the King."

He was held in jail for six years. Upon release he immediately began to preach again, as he had warned his judges that he would, and was clapped back into jail for another six-year term. Then he was released again, only to be arrested again. But this time his prison term lasted only six months. From then until his death in 1688 he roamed England, the acknowledged leader of the Baptists. His greatest book, "Pilgrim's Progress," was written during that final six-months term in Bedford jail. A second part was added four years before Bunyan's death. But the greater part of his writing was a prison product.

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These are the outward facts. But what about the inner man? A hundred different facets of Bunyan's character might be pointed out, but we will be content with only a few.

First of all, he was always a man of the common people. He never overlooked a chance to remind his hearers, and himself, that he was a tinker. Even when the days of his power came, when he became one of the honored men of England, he held himself steadily as a friend and companion of the poor. He was born in poverty; he lived in poverty; he died in poverty. He kept his preaching and his writing on the level of the uneducated. When he wrote his famous autobiography, "Grace Abounding," he said: "I could have stepped into a style much higher than this in which I have here discoursed, and could have adorned all things more than here I have seemed to do; but I dare not. God did not play in convincing of me; the devil did not play in tempting of me; neither did I play when I sunk as into a bottomless pit, when the pangs of hell caught hold upon me: wherefore I may not play in my relating of them, but be plain and simple, and lay down the thing as it was." Plain and simple—that was John Bunyan.

With that sense of his oneness with the common man went a sense of deep humility—abasement would almost be the better word—in the presence of the spiritual leadership which had been given him. The titles of his books abound with expressions such as these: "A Few Sighs from Hell, or the Groans of a Damned Soul, . . . by that poor and contemptible servant of Jesus Christ, John Bunyan"; "Some Gospel Truths Opened . . . by that unworthy servant of Christ, John Bunyan"! "The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded . . . by that Poor, Contemptible Preacher, John Bunyan of Bedford." To the very end he had this same distrust of his own powers. Thus, after listing the "sins" which he still found lurking in his soul, he wrote: "These things I continually see and feel, and am afflicted and oppressed with; yet the wisdom of God doth order them to my good. 1. They make me abhor myself. 2. They keep me from trusting my heart. 3. They convince me of the insufficiency of all inherent righteousness. 4. They show me the necessity of fleeing to Jesus. 5. They press me to pray unto God. 6. They show me the need I have to watch and be sober. 7. And provoke me to look to God, through Christ, to help me and carry me through this world." It was Bunyan the saint, known and honored through all England, who wrote in this fashion.

Yet with all his humility, John Bunyan had a sturdy independence that never deserted him. He respected his own manhood and his own judgment. He was Puritan enough so that the pretensions of the king or of the king's deputies never overawed him. Whole pages in "Pilgrim's

Progress" show how little impression the display of this world's Vanity Fair made upon him. Many a judge tried to browbeat him, and none ever succeeded. Within his own church, Bunyan frequently found his own views in opposition to those of most of his fellow believers. Had he taken the advice of the majority of the Baptists of Bedford, he would have destroyed "Pilgrim's Progress," as too light a book for general circulation. Heaven be praised, he had independence enough to follow his own judgment!

This independence, which impresses you as soon as you begin a study of Bunyan's character, owed itself preëminently to one thing. He believed that he had immediate access to the sources of truth. Through incessant prayer and through an equally incessant reading of the Bible he became convinced that God had spoken to him, and that he could speak with God. No wonder that a man who ran his life on that basis could not be disturbed by the objections of mere men, however lordly their titles. And no wonder that the judges who tried to get Bunyan to agree to abide by the rules of the Established Church found themselves dealing with a man who seemed incapable of perceiving the advantages of conformity.

With it all, it must be recognized that the driving power behind the man's life was his insatiable passion for souls. Why did he spend his hours in prison writing? To kill time? To feel the pleasant glow of self-expression? No; the man seems to have had no literary pretensions at all. There was only one thing in which he was interested: saving souls. There was only one purpose for which he wrote: to save souls. His writing and his preaching alike had but one end: "In my preaching I have really been in pain, and have, as it were, travailed to bring forth children to God; neither could I be satisfied unless some fruits did appear in my work. If I were fruitless, it mattered not who commended me; but if I were fruitful, I cared not who did condemn."

This is not to be taken, however, as meaning that Bunyan's religion was one of those narrowly individualistic matters that paid no attention to anything but the ultimate salvation of the soul of the single sinner. He was indeed concerned to see that the Pilgrim got from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. But he was perfectly aware that the Pilgrim had and has responsibilities to his fellows along the way. Thus, his "'Christian Behavior" gives pointed advice to employers as to how they should treat their employees. His "Holy City" is a picture of the method by which the city of God is to be established among men. And a recent writer, the Rev. Frank Fitt, discussing "John Bunyan: Social Seer," says that his "Life and Death of Mr.

Badman" is packed "with some startling reflections on recent happenings in our industrial and political order. Bunyan might have been writing in 1928 rather than in 1680."

One thrills, too, to Bunyan's unswerving loyalty to truth. His life was crowded with hours when it would have been so easy to compromise. Indeed, the great English historian, Mr. Froude, thinks that Bunyan was almost unreasonable in going to jail for the sake of his ideas in the little out-of-the-way town of Bedford. What good did it do? Why couldn't he have agreed to drop in at the Established Church once in a while, just often enough to preserve the appearance of conformity, and to restrict his preaching to such times and places as the authorities would have been willing to wink at? Well, we can afford to let Bunyan answer that himself: "But if nothing will do, unless I make of my conscience a continual butchery and slaughter-shop, unless, putting out my own eyes, I commit me to the blind to lead me, as I doubt is desired by some, I have determined, the Almighty God being my help and shield, yet to suffer, if frail life might continue so long, even till the moss shall grow on mine eyebrows, rather than thus to violate my faith and principles."

Finally, there was a catholicity about John Bunyan that is hard to escape. To be sure, the man was human, and there were a few men whose ideas he could not stomach. He seems to have felt toward the pope much as Senator Heflin does, although he was not as vociferous in telling the world about it. He did not believe that the Established Church of England, with its printed prayers, knew much about the intimate sort of religion he gloried in. And the Quakers—who at that time were apt to indulge in some of the queer antics that gave them their popular name—were hard for him to understand. But as for all the other kinds of Christians under the sun, John Bunyan was ready to have fellowship with them all.

Naturally, there were many Baptists of his time who disagreed violently with him in this. They thought that the Baptist practice of immersion was a requisite for final appearance on the streets of the Holy City, and when Bunyan showed men of all creeds and sects walking there, they took him to task. So he felt impelled to write several times in defense of the principle of open communion, which he finally established throughout the Baptist Churches of England, and which continues to the present. The titles of some of those books make interesting reading: "Confession of Faith and Reason of My Practice." That started the series. It was followed with "Difference in Judgment about Water Baptism No Bar to Communion, or to Communicate with Saints as Saints Proved Lawful." And finally, as some Baptists remained unconvinced: "Peaceable Principles and True, or a Brief Answer to Dr. Danver's and Mr. Paul's Books against my Confession of Faith, and Differences in Judgment about Water Baptism No Bar to Communion; wherein their Scriptureless notions are overthrown, and my Peaceable Principles still maintained." After that, the "peaceable principles" seem to have triumphed.

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Last year the whole world engaged in celebrating the tercentenary of the birth of John Bunyan. Not only in English-speaking lands, but wherever there are Christian communities there were services in recognition of his life, and the timeless legacy which he left. The Baptists, of course, made much of the event, for they generally consider John Bunyan as the man who did more than any other to transform the Baptist Churches of England from a handful of isolated congregations into one of the united, powerful religious forces in Anglo-Saxon life. But the Baptists were not permitted to hold the celebration within the bounds of their own fellowship. "Pilgrim's Progress," "Grace Abounding," "The Holy War"—these are not Baptist books. They are a gift to the race.

It is the living sense of John Bunyan's oneness with all Christians that makes the career of John Bunyan as a Baptist most significant. The fact about John Bunyan that most needs remembering is not that he helped to make the Baptist Churches the power for good that they have become. That was a service to the kingdom of God not to be despised. But beyond that, it was even more important that he could see outside the limits of his own communion to grasp the hand of every other Christian who was honestly trying to serve the Lord Jesus, and to give a word of understanding and wise counsel to every soul struggling toward the light.

"Pilgrim's Progress" speaks to us all. It has its appeal to us in earliest youth, when we read it simply as a thrilling story. And it speaks again, a deeper, wiser word, as the years pass, and we come to know through bitter experience the perils that beset the pilgrim way. There is one thing in especial for which I feel a debt of gratitude to the great allegorist: he wrote of the Christian life as a real battle against real foes. There is no shadow boxing in the religion of John Bunyan. Sometimes, on close inspection, the lions in the path are discovered to be chained, but often it is only by cruel warfare that one may hew his way forward. I like that honesty.

But that honesty, of course, is possible only because Bunyan knew that beyond the fighting there beckoned victory:

"After this it was noised abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-Truth was taken with a summons, by the same post as the other, and had this for a token that the summons was true: 'That his pitcher was broken at the fountain.' When he understood it, he called for his friends and told them of it. Then said he, I am going to my fathers, and though with great difficulty I am got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles who now will be my rewarder. When the day that he must go hence was come, many accompanied him to the riverside, into which as he went he said, 'Death, where is thy sting?' And as he went down deeper, he said, 'Grave, where is thy victory?' So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

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GEORGE FOX AND HIS QUAKERS

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GEORGE FOX AND HIS QUAKERS

HERE is a scene that captured the imagination of stout old Thomas Carlyle. He watched it with fascination. He preached about it. He sank his strong Scotch teeth into it and whipped it back and forth as a sheep collie might a well-meated joint. It is the picture of a young English shoemaker, a lad still short of his majority, punching his needle through the tough hide of a suit of leather. In that suit, immune to any whims of weather or of mobs, the young man is presently to start out to challenge the soul of England. And the brooding Carlyle, seeing the needle flash back and forth, cried:

"That Leicester shoe shop, had men but known it, was a holier place than any Vatican or Loretto shrine. Often has it seemed to me as if such first outflashing of man's Free will, to lighten more and more into Day, the Chaotic Night that threatens to engulf him, were properly the only grandeur there is in History. . . . Stitch away, thou noble Fox; every prick of that little instrument is pricking into the heart of Slavery and World worship, and the Mammon-god; . . . every stroke is bearing thee across the Prison-ditch, within which Vanity holds her work-house and Ragfair, into the lands of true Liberty; were the work done, there is in broad Europe one Free Man, and thou art he."

And along with this scene in the shoemaker's shop, which Carlyle saw as the making of Europe's one free man, I like to place the picture of another. This time the place is London. It is early morning in the palace occupied by Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of Britain. There are only two actors: this same George Fox, still a young man, still clad in his impregnable suit of leather, and the Lord Protector, who has given orders that this strange figure shall be admitted to his presence at this unusual hour.

There the two men stand confronting each other: the one in leather and the other in his underclothes. But neither is a man to regard outer apparel. Both bear the marks of hard struggle: Cromwell of Marston Moor and Naseby and Preston and the bloody campaign in Ireland; Fox of years in prison, in the stocks, in the midst of bloodthirsty mobs, living like an outlaw. Fox has been arrested again, this time charged in some vague way with plotting against Cromwell's government. Much as St. Paul appealed to Cæsar and was sent to Rome, the military tribunal before which the young Quaker leader first appeared had sent him on to London to be examined by Cromwell himself.

Arriving at the capital, "I was moved of the

Lord," writes Fox in telling the story, "to write a paper to the Protector Oliver Cromwell, wherein I did, in the presence of the Lord God, declare that I denied the wearing or drawing of any carnal weapon against him or any man, that I was sent of God to stand a witness against all violence, to turn people from darkness to light, and to bring them from the causes of war and fighting to the peaceable gospel."

Undoubtedly, Cromwell was interested in any man who could establish a "peaceable gospel" in the harried land over which he was ruling. So his chamber door was speedily opened to the Quaker. Fox, entering, said, "Peace be in this house," but neither removed his hat nor bowed his knee. But that seems not to have bothered Cromwell as it did the judges of his realm before whom Fox was constantly being forced to appear.

"I spoke to him much of truth," was Fox's own summary of the conversation. Knowing the man, it is safe to surmise that Cromwell heard such unvarnished facts and direct admonitions as a Lord Protector would not be accustomed to hearing. His response seems to have been equally direct. As Fox left, his guard followed with word that "the Protector said I was at liberty and might go where I would." More than that, there followed an invitation from the Protector, "that I might dine with them." Fox's next sentences are too good to be read in any but his own words: "I bid them let the Protector know that I would not eat of his bread or drink of his drink. When he heard this he said, 'Now I see there is a people risen that I cannot win with gifts or honors, offices or places; all other sects and peoples I can.'"

Certainly Carlyle was right in dubbing George Fox a free man. But as I read these pages in his Journal it seems to me that there were two free men in that Europe—Fox, who had won his freedom spiritually, and the Cromwell who appraised him so justly, a man who had won his freedom through the conquest of earthly power. Of the two, the man in the leather suit was surely the more completely free.

Cromwell and Fox met on several occasions after this. The Protector seems never to have lost his respect for the "free" man. After every such meeting there is record of his pressing Fox to visit him more often. Surrounded as he was by the sycophants who gravitate to every court, the unapologetic candor of the Quaker must have seemed a refreshing change to the forthright Ironside. Of these other meetings, the final one merits telling, again in Fox's own words:

"I met him riding in Hampton Court Park, and before I came to him, as he rode at the head of his Life Guard, I saw and felt a waft of death go forth against him, and when I came to him he looked like a dead man. After I had laid the sufferings of Friends before him, and warned him, according as I was moved to speak to him, he bade me come to his house. So I returned to Kingston, and next day went to Hampton Court, to speak further with him. But when I came he was sick, and Harvey, who was one that waited on him, told me the doctors were not willing that I should speak with him. So I passed away and never saw him more."

* * * *

And now let us look a bit more closely at the personal history of George Fox. He was the son of a weaver, Christopher Fox, one of those quiet, inconspicuous, but terribly earnest men who made up the soul of the Puritan movement in England. Known in all the country round about his home as Righteous Christer, Fox's father passed the virtues of that simple Puritan household on to his son, so that he could write in later years: "I never wronged man or woman in all that time. While I was in that service I used in my dealings the word, Verily, and it was a common saying among those who knew me, 'If George says Verily, there is no altering him.'"

George Fox grew up in the midst of a distraught country. The year after his birth Charles I came to the English throne. Almost immediately the struggle began which was to culminate in the king's decapitation, twenty-four years later. But the young shoemaker—his parents had apprenticed him to that trade after having for a time considered making a clergyman of him—passed through the period of England's civil war without being drawn into its vortex. In fact, it was during this war that drew men into battle chanting Psalms, and in which they regarded their victories as evidence of the direct interposition of God on their behalf, that Fox arrived at his conviction of the sinfulness of all fighting, no matter what the cause.

It is impossible to reproduce to-day any adequate sense of the confusion that reigned in the British Isles during the years that George Fox was growing to manhood. Four main religious parties took the field against each other. There was the Church of England, backbone of the king's cause, and strongly liturgic and sacramentarian in its tendencies. There was the Church of Scotland, established Presbyterianism as sure of its own righteousness and of the spiritual shortcomings of all other Churches as any communion in Christian history. There were the Puritans, some of them in the Church of England; more, except during the Cromwellian period, in the ranks of "dissent." And there were the Roman Catholics, a bugaboo against whom all the others were generally ready to unite.

A genuine religious genius, Fox early felt the unsatisfactory character of much that passed for religion in the society of his time. The ritualistic Churches he soon came to regard as the perpetrators of mere mummery; and that estimate of Romanism and of High-Church Anglicanism he held to the end of his life. But in Puritanism, also, he found a disheartening gap between the extremely pious professions that were to be heard on every side and the actual manner of living of many of the professors. And the attempt to settle the differences existing between all these parties by butchering one another he regarded as a clear denial of the Word of God.

So, youngster that he was, Fox started out to find for himself some basis of religion that would prove firm beneath the demands of life. In the year that King Charles finally surrendered to parliament, he underwent his transforming experience: "Seeking heavenly wisdom and getting knowledge from the Lord alone . . . I regarded priests* less and looked more after dissenting people . . . among whom I saw there was some tenderness. But as I had forsaken priests, so I left the dissenting preachers also, for I saw that there was none among them that could speak to my condition. When all my hopes in them and all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, then, O then, I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even

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*"Priests," with Fox, always meant the clergy of the Church of England.

Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition.' . . . And when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy. . . . Christ Jesus, who enlightens and gives grace and faith and *power*. And this I knew experimentally."

Here was the message that was to form the Society of Friends. To an England confused and exhausted by the thundering of mutually recriminatory sects, Fox went out proclaiming the promise of a revealing light which should shine directly from God into the heart of each true believer. The Bible was indeed a revelation of God's will, but over and above that, it was the privilege of every true Christian to have a revelation of his own, a personal inner illumination, which should settle all problems afflicting their own souls, while it fired them for service toward others.

A little reflection will show how inevitably certain ideas, that came to be regarded as the typical Quaker teachings, grew out of this belief in an *inner light*—to use the Quaker phrase—given directly by God to each true child of his. If there was this direct illumination, why should there be a professional ministry? The true agents for passing on the will of God would then obviously be anybody anywhere whom God had blessed with the gift of this inward revelation of truth. What of the sacraments? The illuminated life is the true sacrament; anything else is apt to stand in the way of the necessary inner illumination. What of the Churches, or, as Fox always called them, the steeple houses? The more costly and ornate, the more difficult would it be for the worshiping soul to prepare itself for an inner communion with the Divine.

There were other positions that the Quakers took, arguing from the same premises. Why should a man make oath? They lived, be it remembered, in a period when the very earth seemed to reverberate with bloated, mouth-filling oaths, but when men, from the king down, showed their complete indifference to the performance of much that they had sworn. Why should a man, animated by the inner light, put himself in danger of such stultification? Was not his simple affirmation sufficient? And, if God regarded men with such equality that he would give his inner light to all who sought it, how could men be justified in hacking one another to pieces? Or in showing signs of servility before any? Or in enslaving any? Or in treating with cruelty any, even though they might be in prison?

* * * *

Well, this is a brief, and I fear very inadequate, summary of the stock of ideas with which George Fox, when twenty-three years of age, started out to convert England. Perhaps no man in all Christian history lived a more stirring, adventurous life. The best account of it is still that in Fox's own Journal—one of the great autobiographies in the English language. But that volume needs to be read with the imagination as well as with the eyes, for many of the most dramatic episodes are dismissed by Fox with a few brief sentences. Yet, if you are looking for racy reading, as well as an unmatched picture of England in the seventeenth century, I commend you to George Fox's Journal.

Here, for instance, is Fox getting himself into jail—an art at which he proved exceedingly proficient throughout his life:

"Now as I went toward Nottingham on the First-day in the morning with Friends to a meeting there, when I came on top of a hill in sight of the town, I espied the great steeple house, and the Lord said unto me, 'Thou must go cry against yonder great idol, and against the worshipers therein.' I said nothing of this to the Friends that were with me, but went on with them to the meeting, where the mighty power of the Lord was amongst us; in which I left the Friends sitting in the meeting, and I went away to the steeple house.

"When I came there, all the people looked like fallow ground, and the priest, like a lump of earth, stood in his pulpit above. He took for his text these words of Peter, 'We have also a more sure Word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.' And he told the people that this was the Scriptures, by which they were to try all doctrines, religions, and opinions.

"Now the Lord's power was so mighty upon me, and so strong in me, that I could not hold, but was made to cry out and say, 'O, no, it is not the Scriptures.' But I told them what it was, namely, the Holy Spirit, by which the holy men of God gave forth the Scriptures, whereby opinions, religions, and judgments were to be tried; for it led into all Truth, and so gave the knowledge of all truth. . . .

"Now as I spake thus amongst them, the officers came and took me away, and put me into a nasty, stinking prison." . . .

We will not finish that quotation, which was meant for a seventeenth- rather than a twentieth-century audience. But here is Fox, not going to jail, but undergoing what came to be the normal experiences of his ministry:

"Now while I was at Mansfield-Woodhouse, I was moved to go to the steeple house there on a First-day, out of the meeting in Mansfield, and declare the truth to the priest and people; but the people fell upon me in great rage, struck me down, and almost stifled and smothered me; and I was cruelly beaten and bruised by them with their hands, Bibles, and sticks. Then they haled me out, though I was hardly able to stand,

and they brought dog-whips and horse-whips, threatening to whip me, and as I sate in the stocks they threw stones at me.

"After some time they had me before the magistrate, at a knight's house, where were many great persons; who, seeing how evilly I had been used, after much threatening, set me at liberty. But the rude people stoned me out of the town, and threatened me with pistols, for preaching the word of life to them. I was scarce able to move or stand, by reason of the ill-usage I had received; yet with considerable effort I got about a mile from the town, and then I met with some people who gave me something to comfort me, because I was inwardly bruised; but the Lord's power went through me and healed me."

What Fox learned to undergo himself, the men and women who listened to his message and joined his Society of Friends, also learned to take as the normal way of their lives. Everywhere the simple Quaker meetings were regarded as fair game for rioters. Fox's Journal abounds in incidents much like this one:

"Thence we passed into Somersetshire, where the Presbyterians and other professors were very wicked and often disturbed Friends' meetings. One time especially there was a very wicked man, whom they got to come to the meeting; this man put a bear's skin on his back, and undertook with that to play pranks in the Quakers' general meeting. Accordingly, setting himself just opposite to the Friend that was speaking, he lolled his tongue out of his mouth, having his bear's skin on his back, and so made sport to his wicked followers, and caused a great disturbance in the meeting.

"And as he returned from the meeting there was a bull-baiting in the way which he stayed to see; and coming within the bull's reach, he struck his horn under the man's chin into his throat, and struck his tongue out of his mouth, so that it hung lolling out, as he had used it before in derision in the meeting. And the bull's horn running up into the man's head, he swung him about on his horn. Thus he that came to do mischief among God's people was mischiefed himself."

Evidently, even though Fox would not lift his own hand to punish such a disturber, he was not at all surprised to find the Almighty interfering in such a fashion!

But the record of meetings broken up—a record that stretches out over page after page of the Journal—was not the worst of what befell the early followers of Fox. During most of the period of Fox's life England had in force laws which made it a prison offense to hold or attend church services other than those which happened at the moment to be the services of the established Church. Even when, during Cromwell's protectorate, the Puritans controlled the state Church, "private" religious services were strictly forbidden. The Quakers, in fact, generally found it easier to get along with the religiously indifferent Cavaliers than with the fanatically intolerant Roundheads.

Most of the "dissenting" sects managed to get around these legal restrictions in one way or another. They held their meetings secretly, or they held them in private homes where—for local reasons—the officers of the law hesitated to make arrests. Fox always insisted that his followers should not only refuse to be bound by what he considered an unrighteous law, but that they should hold their own meetings openly, and should always welcome arrest and imprisonment. The result was that there were times when the prisons of England were simply overrunning with Quakers.

There was one charge which, when all others failed, the magistrates who desired to persecute the Quakers—and that seemed to include most of the magistrates of that period—could always rely on to secure a conviction. It might be impossible to prove any overt wrongdoing against a Quaker, but he could always be called on to take the oath of allegiance to the king, or to take the oath to testify to the truth in his trial. Hundreds who refused were sent to rot in the filthy holes that then passed for jails, and scores offered their lives up through diseases contracted in this fashion. Even the great William Penn, son of the Admiral Sir William Penn, and himself a friend of the king, spent years of his life in jail.

"The absent-minded average man," says Mary Agnes Best in her vivid book, "Rebel Saints," which tells of these early Quakers, "thought of those early Quakers, if he thought at all, as well-meaning, more or less cowardly, and too good to know any better, leading lives as drab as their clothes, their chief activity going into the silence. . . . Compared with the primitive Quakers, the I. W. W. in the oil fields of Oklahoma lead a sheltered and protected life. Far from being drab, their lives were lurid. They reached out toward danger as plants toward the sun. . . . To the enrichment of their queen and their enterprising fellow countrymen, they were sold into Barbadoes, where those who survived the terrors of the transports were fattened for sale in stockades. As slaves among the heathen in Africa, their lot on the whole was less bitter than as freemen in England. In Old and New England vivisection was practiced on them—tortures too brutal to repeat to sensitive modern ears. They glutted English jails, and the convict ships on which they were deported afforded them hardly more than standing room only. Too frequently their sufferings were relieved by a martyr's death, and the history of their adventurous lives reads like an invasion of the realm of Teutonic legendary tales."

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I presume that it is superfluous, after thus speaking of the lives of the early Quakers, to talk of the courage of their leader. It is obvious that no movement could command such heroism from its followers if it did not have a hero at its head. And to call Fox a hero is to use a word that, when compared with his exploits, seems thin and weak. Every page of his Journal is the record of a superb and unfaltering courage, and the splendor of that courage is the more untarnished because it seems never to have occurred to George Fox that he was acting in a specially heroic manner. He was just following his inner light. That, for him, was all there was to it. But that inner light led him into some dark and dangerous places.

Consider, merely as one example, the voyage that he made to America. The Quakers were always making voyages in those early days. The inner voice would speak to some sheltered English maid, telling her to go and attempt the conversion of the Sultan of Turkey, and off she would go, alone, on a voyage that would, by some miraculous fashion, bring her after incredible adventures into the very presence of the Sultan, where she would deliver her "concern," and so impress him that he would send her home with every mark of regal favor.

Naturally, with all this Quaker voyaging under way, George Fox had to voyage. He went to America. He sailed on a leaky little tub that almost foundered before they were out of sight of English land; but all hands stood by the pumps most of the way across, and eventually Fox reached Maryland. Then he started visiting the various Quaker meetings that were already to be found on this side of the Atlantic. Considering the social standing of the Quakers—for this was the period when the godly citizens of the city of Boston were hanging Quakers on their famous Common—Fox might have been expected to find enough to do in looking after his own followers. But no; he must go to the Indians.

So to the Indians he went. The Indians were by this time convinced that the arrival of the white man was not an unmixed blessing. They were in favor of strict immigration restrictions, and low quotas. And they had learned that when a white settler called upon the name of his God it was a good time for any contiguous red men to get behind a tree. But Fox walked into the Indian camps empty-handed. He won their complete confidence. For the rest of the time that he remained in the new world, he traveled through the wilderness under their guidance and protection. And, taken all in all, those were probably the safest and happiest days of his life.

* * * *

Of course, he was an individualist, in the sense that every genius is an individualist. He clothed himself in a leather suit and a white hat. It made him conspicuous: a walking advertisement. After he had been around the circuit of England about once in that outfit, he did not have to trouble to tell strangers who he was. That was not the reason why he made himself such a costume; he was merely after dress that would stand ill usage—and goodness knows it got enough of it—and never wear out. But whatever Fox's purpose, that was the effect.

His use of "thee" and "thou" seemed almost equally eccentric. Yet that, too, was no mere effort to be different. In the north of England, where Fox grew up, thee and thou were the usual pronouns used between equals; there was recognition of social rank in "you." It is still so in some parts of rural England. Fox used the Biblical sounding pronouns simply to show that, since all are equal in the eyes of God, all were equal in his eyes also.

Then there was that matter of taking off one's hat. When you read of Fox's innumerable trials before judges in all parts of England it seems as though more than half of the court's time was spent in wrangling as to whether or not Fox should be allowed to keep his hat on, or as to whether or not he should be allowed to testify without taking an oath. Yet Fox was not keeping his hat on out of sheer perversity, or the desire to create comment. He was simply trying to show that he did not approve of showing servility to any man. When Fox faced Cromwell, his hat sat firmly on his head; when William Penn asked an empire of his king, he did it covered.

Fox, in other words, was out to show his freedom from the conventions which help to continue the inequalities and injustices of society. Yet these habits of action and speech which he followed were, in his own mind, very subservient to his major aim. At one time, when he had been chided with making the faith of his Society of Friends depend on matters of dress and speech and eating, he answered in this fashion:

"And so our religion lay not in meats, nor drinks, nor clothes, nor Thee nor Thou, nor putting off hats nor making curtseys. . . . But our answer was, 'Nay: for though the Spirit of God led into that which was comely and decent, and from chambering and wantonness, and from sporting and pastimes and feasting as in the day of slaughter, and from wearing costly apparel, as the Apostle commands, and from the world's honor, fashions, and customs—our religion lies in that which brings to visit the poor, and fatherless, and widows, and keeps from the spots of the world (which religion is pure and undefiled before God.)"

* * * *

Such an expression throws a light on another aspect of George Fox's religion that must not be overlooked. From the very beginning of his preaching career, he was a man with a burning social passion. A religion that did not care for the poor and fatherless and widows was, to him, no religion at all. The man, when out of jail, was constantly writing to magistrates, pleading for justice or mercy for the unfortunates who were to stand before their benches. When in jail, he was constantly petitioning the authorities to remedy the loathsome conditions of the prisons. Prison reform really began with the Quakers. And George Fox had more to do with the Emancipation Proclamation than John Brown or Abraham Lincoln.

Examples of this social passion of Fox's are so thickly strewn through his Journal that one is at a loss as to which to quote. Here is an episode, however, that casts a flood of light, not only on George Fox and his methods, but even more on the period in which he lived:

"While I was in Cornwall there were great shipwrecks about the Land's End. Now it was the custom of that country, that at such a time both rich and poor went out to get as much of the wreck as they could, not caring to save the people's lives; and in some places they called shipwrecks 'God's grace.' These things troubled me; it grieved my spirit to hear of such unchristian actions. Wherefore I was moved to write a paper, and send it to all the parishes, priests, and magistrates, to reprove them for such greedy actions, and to warn and exhort them that, if they could assist to save people's lives and preserve their ships and goods, they should use their diligence therein; and consider, if it had been their own condition, they would judge it hard if they should be upon a wreck and people should strive to get what they could from them, and not matter their lives.

"This paper had good service among the people; and Friends have endeavored much to save the lives of the men in times of wrecks, and to preserve the ships and goods for them. And when some that have suffered shipwreck have been almost dead and starved, some Friends have taken them to their houses to succor and recover them; which is an act to be practiced by all true Christians."

* * * *

So I might go on, almost indefinitely, writing of the character and career of George Fox, did space permit. I can only indulge myself in one other comment, and that concerns the capacity of the man for friendship. The history of the Christian Church shows nothing more beautiful than the friendships which George Fox maintained with hundreds of his followers. Men followed Luther, Loyola, Wesley because they were obviously leaders set apart by God for the command of armies. But men followed George Fox, as they followed St. Francis, because they loved him. And he was able to forge those bonds with persons drawn from every social background. William Penn was his intimate; Margaret Fell was his wife, and both were aristocrats. But the roll of Fox's closest friends was largely composed of persons whose homes had been, and were, as humble as the weaver's home from which Fox himself came.

There is a love story, too, connected with Fox—a strange love story, but in many ways a very beautiful one. One of the early Quaker converts was Margaret Fell, the young wife of Judge Fell of Swarthmore Hall. For as long as her first husband lived, Margaret Fell made Swarthmore Hall a sort of city of refuge for the hunted Quaker preachers. Then, when the protection of Judge Fell's name was removed by death, the young widow went out to share the full rigors of Quaker life. She lost her stately home, but she found a new lover and a new husband in George Fox.

To many he must have seemed a queer sort of husband. He was almost never at home. He showered his wife and her children with letters showing his love, but most of her letters to him had to catch him either on the wing somewhere, or in some jail. Here is just one of his letters, but it seems to me to give more of the quality of the romance of George Fox and Margaret Fell than any amount of description could hope to give:

> Dear Heart,—To whom is my love and to the children, and to all the rest of Friends, in the Lord's truth, power and seed, that is over all; glory to the Lord, and blessed be His name for ever beyond all words, who hath carried me through and over many trials and dangers, in His eternal power. I have been twice at Gracious Street meeting; and though the opposite spirits were there, yet all was quiet; the dew of heaven fell upon the people, and the glory of the Lord shined over all. Every day I am fain to be at meetings about business, and sufferings which are great abroad; and now many Friends are concerned with many persons about them.
>
> So in haste, with my love to you all. G. F.
>
> London, the 24th of the 9th month, 1677.

There was a deep love here; a love that knew that Margaret Fell would be more concerned as to what had happened at the meeting in Gracious Street than over any light triflings of words in which the writer might indulge.

So the man went on to the end of his course. He could not even come home to die; she could not even share his closing hours. The end came in London, and that same day, before interment could be made in the Friends' burying ground near Bunhill Fields, this letter was in the post:

Dear M. Fox,—With the dear remembrance of my unfeigned love in Christ Jesus, I am to be the teller to thee of sorrowful tidings as I may call it in some sense, which is this, that thy dear husband and my beloved and dear Friend, G. Fox, has finished his glorious testimony this night about half an hour after nine, being sensible to the last breath.

Oh, he is gone and has left us in the storm that is over our heads, surely in great mercy to him, but as an evidence to us of sorrows to come. He was as living and firm Fourth Day last was a week at Gracechurch Street, and this last First day, being the day before yesterday, but complained after meeting of being inwardly struck, and lay ever since at Henry Goldney's where he departed.

My soul is deeply affected with this hasty, great loss. Surely it portends to us great evils to come. A prince indeed is fallen in Israel to-day.

I cannot enlarge for I shall write to several to-night and it is late. The Lord be with thee and thine, and us all. Amen.

I am thy faithful and affectionate Friend,

Wm. Penn.

He died as he lived, a lamb, minding the things of God and His Church to the last in a universal spirit.

London, 13th of the 11th Month, 1690.

* * * *

George Fox—a free man. Free to tell the truth of God, as he saw it. Free to submit all the institutions of mankind to the judgment of the will of God, as he knew it. Free to gather his followers to live the life of sons of God, without fear of ridicule or of opposition. The Quaker band has never been very large. But it has always been potent. Perhaps it has never been more potent than it is to-day. With the services that the Quakers have rendered, during and since the war, in binding up the wounds of a bleeding world, in feeding the fatherless and caring for the widows, we are all familiar. And for this Quaker heritage we give God thanks.

But there is another Quaker heritage of which we stand in equal need. That is the sense of the equality of all men before God. Already, that sense has made slavery impossible. Soon, it will make war equally impossible. The inner light, which first lighted George Fox, and which has been kept alight by his followers, will blaze with such brightness in the souls of men everywhere that the hellishness of mutual destruction will be clear, and the reign of peace will begin

VI

WYCLIFFE AND THE ANGLICANS

VI

WYCLIFFE AND THE ANGLICANS

Our title lands us in immediate difficulty. We are considering the "Men Who Made the Churches," and now we speak of John Wycliffe as *a* father—if not *the* father—of that great branch of Christendom which can be most easily grouped under the name Anglican. This includes, of course, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States as well as all the churches in Canada, Asia, Africa, South America, and the isles of the sea that derive from the Established Church of England. But who is to name the father of Anglicanism? There are certain Episcopalians who will maintain that their Church was founded by St. Peter, exercising the authority given him by his Lord. If you do not proceed on that view, they will suspect that you are trying to undermine the foundations of their body. There are others—perhaps not many Episcopalians among them—who will hold that the Church of England was a creation of Henry VIII. If you do not proceed on that view, they will accuse you of shutting your eyes to the plain facts of history.

I suspect that the divergence between these two points of view can never be reconciled. At least, I am not going to try to reconcile it here. Frankly, I am going to dodge the issue. I am going to settle down at a period that is neither apostolic nor Tudor, and I am going to single out a humble parish minister and write of him as one who truly stood at the headwaters of the stream of Anglicanism which still flows for the spiritual replenishment of the nations. My hero—for he is that, nothing less!—my hero is John Wycliffe.

To any who may still feel like taking exception to this choice, let me make this brief explanation. I know, of course, that the Anglican Churches hold the doctrine of apostolic succession. It is, for many Anglicans, the foundation stone of their whole churchly structure. But so do other churches. The dogma is not enough, in itself, to set Anglicanism apart from a dozen other communions. Anglicanism as Anglicanism—as its name implies—had its rise in a definite locality, and so at a definite time. If you are searching for the time when the first foreshadowing of this particular communion called Anglicanism appeared, I doubt whether you can do better than to go back to Wycliffe.

And of course I know that Henry VIII played a tremendous part in bringing the Church of England into self-conscious, separate existence. Any good history of England, any biography of Henry, will make that clear. But there is something in the appearance of Anglicanism on the stage of Christian history deeper than Henry's politics or Henry's somewhat lusty personal desires. To understand why, when Henry broke with the pope, England was ready to support him, and why, when Henry had passed off the stage, even "Bloody Mary" was unable to destroy this independent church he had fostered, we must go deeper than anything to be found in Henry. This "something deeper" is to be found first clearly expressed in Wycliffe.

Therefore to Wycliffe we go: John Wycliffe, prophetic forerunner of the Church of England.

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Any attempt to write a personal sketch of Wycliffe is confronted by immense difficulties. The man lived too soon for the purposes of the modern biographer. The fourteenth century came before the time of printing presses and newspapers and personal reminiscences and all that sort of thing. It was, in fact, the very time at which this robust English language of ours was being born. One of Wycliffe's contemporaries—a man who seems to have had the utmost sympathy with the reformer's practices—was Geoffrey Chaucer, the poet whose Canterbury Pilgrims shows how great must have been the delights of authorship in the days before you had to worry about spelling.

It is thus unfortunately true that the store of personal anecdotes concerning Wycliffe which any writer has to draw on is limited. You will not find many of them in this sketch, but you can rest assured that the ones you do find are almost all there are. The influence of Wycliffe on English thought; Wycliffe's contribution to the making of the Protestant Reformation; Wycliffe's opposition to the papacy—these and a dozen more topics can be treated at great length, as Principal Workman and others have shown. But Wycliffe himself, Wycliffe the man, remains a figure somewhat dim. In the main, we must reconstruct him from a sight of the things he did. We are, in this, in the position of the zoölogist who finds a giant footprint in some bed of petrified prehistoric slime, and from that footprint reconstructs the image of the mammal that must have passed that way.

Concerning Wycliffe's personal appearance, about all we know is that he was tall and, in contrast with many of the parish priests of his time, thin. He habitually wore the scholar's long black gown. The ascetic nature of the man seems to have impressed profoundly both the leaders and the masses of his day. His habits were of the simplest; when he sent out his followers without money in their purses and without a change of clothes to bear on their backs, he was asking them to do no more than follow the simple régime that had always been his. His hands were the hands of a scholar. His eyes were the most commanding feature he possessed.

That is not very much in the way of description, but it is all we have. Fortunately, it is not all we know about Wycliffe. And the other things that we know are far more meaningful than the most exact full-length photograph of the man could be.

* * * *

What sort of man was John Wycliffe?

He was a great Englishman. That is the thing to put down first and always to keep in mind when considering him and his career He was a great Englishman. He was not a parochialist. He traveled outside England; he even served on a diplomatic mission at Bruges. But with it all, he was a great lover of England. He sprang from the common ranks of English life, and he never got very far away from the interests of the masses of England. Even when he had the free run of the court he was content to spend most of his time in a country parish. And as he grew older, as his career developed, he more and more gave himself to living with and in service for the common folk of England. At the end, it was only the common folk who still received his message.

It may not seem so important that John Wycliffe was, first and foremost, a loyal Englishman. England has never lacked for the love of her sons and daughters. Patriotism is not a virtue so rare as to attract attention in the "tight little isle." But the significance of Wycliffe's patriotism lies in the fact that he lived at a time when this feeling of loyalty to one's own country was a new phenomenon among men. Not only in England, but in Germany and in France, and later in Italy and in Spain, the first stirrings of that emotion known as nationalism were just being felt as the fourteenth century opened. The feudal ideas of personal loyalty were about to pass before the rise of a new loyalty—loyalty to country. Englishmen were still ready to be loyal to a king, as long as he deserved their loyalty. But, first of all, they were intent on being loyal to England. Three centuries later, Oliver Cromwell had to make the distinction so clear that no king could miss it.

The Middle Ages were dominated by one sovereignty that, in the name of religion, claimed to hold under its sway all other sovereignties. That was the sovereignty of the Church in the keeping of the pope. Wycliffe, remember, was a priest of the Church. He might have been expected, therefore, to have upheld the papal claims, which were being vociferously asserted throughout his life. But the whole period was one in which kings and emperors and barons were beginning to resist the papal claims. The papacy itself helped to hasten that movement when it split into two parts, and each part proclaimed the falsity of the other. Naturally, papal supremacy had trouble in maintaining itself under such conditions. And John Wycliffe, disgusted with the conditions which he found within the Church, and throbbing with the new consciousness of the dignity that attached to a man just because he was an Englishman, he threw himself ardently on the side of the national movement.

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He was a great scholar. This, too, must always be remembered when the influence of Wycliffe is studied. There were not many scholars in the Middle Ages. The illiteracy rate in the England of Wycliffe's day must have been higher than that in the China of Sun Yat-Sen's day. For that reason, such scholars as there were stood in positions of great honor. They had their own laws, their own social rank, their own garb, their own special privileges. Most of them were priests, although from Wycliffe's time on the drift in the universities was rapidly toward the education of laymen.

John Wycliffe was not only a scholar; he was a great scholar. A graduate of Oxford, his name stands as one of the early Masters of Balliol. The position did not then mean all that it does now, when the Master of Balliol holds a rank in England somewhat comparable with that of the President of Harvard in this country. But it was a distinction, nonetheless. And throughout his career, Wycliffe was generally accepted by his contemporaries as the greatest scholar in England. This was true not only when he lectured at Oxford to crowded classes; it was equally true when he retired to the obscurity of his parish at Lutterworth. Even when his supporters in the nobility had largely deserted him, and when it seemed as though he could not defend himself, few of his opponents cared to challenge the brilliant mind of Wycliffe.

One is tempted to pause for a moment at this point to notice the close connection that there seems to be between religious adventuring and scholarship. Of the eight men being considered in this series of sketches, six were university students. Four—Luther, Knox, Wycliffe, and Wesley—were university professors. Two—Luther and Wycliffe—spent most of their lives in residence at a college. One—Campbell—spent years as president of a college. It is not unusual to discover people who believe that there is some connection between piety and ignorance; who hold that schools are hard places in which to breed faith. For vital religious leadership such people would look to the men and women who have never been "weakened" in their religious fervor by the questions raised on a college campus. Let it be freely admitted that many religious leaders of outstanding worth have been men without much formal education. Bunyan and Fox, whom we have already considered, are examples. Yet it is likewise the verdict of history that much of the most adventurous and most abiding leadership which the Christian cause has known has been supplied by men with the finest educational equipment their time afforded. And in the group of God-inspired scholars who have carried forward the kingdom, John Wycliffe stands well toward the front.

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He was a man who inspired the confidence of others. I suppose this is only another way of saying that he was a great leader. It is astonishing, when you consider candidly the humbleness of the position occupied by Wycliffe, to see how far his influence spread. He taught in a day when the total number of students was lost in the great illiterate mass. He preached in a little country church that was far outside the main currents of his country's life. He wrote and translated before the time when there were presses to sow his books broadcast. Yet he moved all England. How did it happen?

The answer is, of course, that he was always able to command the interest and following of men who were eager to spread his message far beyond any bounds that Wycliffe himself could reach. In the beginning, it was the Oxford student body that caught the thrill of Wycliffe's ideas, and scattered over England proclaiming the presence of a master teacher. In that way they gathered for him a ceaseless procession of new pupils, many of whom were to become disciples.

Later, Wycliffe gained the support of John of Gaunt, powerful son of Edward III, and founder of that Lancastrian party that was to shake England almost to pieces in its contest with the house of York. Studied without prejudice, there is little enough in the career of John of Gaunt to commend him to our enthusiasm. He seems to have been a rough-handed, brutal-minded, marauding baron, whose principal aim in life was to gain as much wealth and power as he could. He had no sympathy with the aspirations of the masses, who were struggling to escape from serfdom. He had only the vaguest sort of appreciation of the significance of the nationalist stirring in the England of his day. Yet he comes down to us a figure of honor, saluted with praise by Shakespeare as "old John of Gaunt, time-honored Lancaster." And this largely because, among all the other good and bad things that marked his life, he did offer patronage to Geoffrey Chaucer and he did give protection, for a time, to John Wycliffe.

John of Gaunt's championship of Wycliffe is one of those examples of the way in which a political leader will sometimes try to make use of the ideas and public standing of a religious leader. As a teacher at Oxford, Wycliffe had come to the conclusion that the whole system under which the Church owned great portions of England, the enormous income from which found its way into the coffers of the Church, and much of it finally into the coffers of the pope, was a menace to true religion. He was for ridding the Church of all such entangling alliances with the world, in order that the Church might return to the preaching of a gospel nearer to that proclaimed by the Teacher of Galilee who warned against laying up treasure on earth. John of Gaunt had no particular interest in the purification of the Church's teaching. He did, however, have an enormous desire to possess much of the property held by the Church. Wycliffe's proposal that the pope rid himself of this property struck John as a fine idea. Accordingly, he constituted himself Wycliffe's champion, and for years defended him from all attacks.

This does not, I admit, put the relationship between Wycliffe and the Duke of Lancaster on a very high plane. Nor, it may be objected, does it prove Wycliffe's ability to inspire confidence. The point, however, is this: Whatever John of Gaunt's original motive in coming to the support of Wycliffe, events soon put that relationship to a terrific test. Wycliffe was too independent a spirit to "stand hitched." He was constantly espousing views and causes that John of Gaunt, and all his noble retainers, detested. Yet for years, despite this wide divergence of views, and despite Wycliffe's absolute refusal to heed his patron's advice as to when and how to speak and when to keep silent, Wycliffe maintained the esteem and protection of the court. There was something in the man that compelled even the capricious and short-sighted and violent-tempered Lancastrians to stand by him.

Even more inspiring than his maintenance of the respect of the nobility was his relationship with his "poor preachers." We shall speak of these at more length later. But there is something behind the story of Wycliffe and his first Lollard missionaries that testifies to the man's ability to move men to embrace death in his cause. Like Garibaldi, he had nothing to offer those later followers but wounds and death. His preachers received no salaries; they could look forward to no preferment. Yet they gave their lives to the preaching of the gospel Wycliffe placed in their keeping. Scores of them sealed their allegiance with martyrdom.

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He was a social radical. If there had been a D. A. R. in the England of Edward III, Wycliffe would have been right up at the head of the blacklist. In the eyes of his contemporaries he was not only a "red": he was a "scarlet." And he was the worst kind of a radical—the kind that founds its radicalism on its religion. He was, for one thing, a communist. But his communism was not an outgrowth of economic study; it was a result of his conviction that communism is the only sort of social organization that accords with the New Testament. There is something a little sardonic in regarding a man who held such views as a father of the Established Church of England.

Nor was he content to hold his radical social views in private. He spread them as widely as he did his teachings concerning the papacy. "He was," Dr. S. Parkes Cadman has said, "in a great ethical sense a lover of God, of goodness, and of his fellow creatures; especially such as were deserted and forlorn; victimized by the outrageous evils which a merciless caste system inflicted on the poor. These he cared for as though they were his own, and the more persistently because of their wretchedness. . . . 'Poor men,' he cried, 'have naked sides and dead walls have plenty of waste gold.' The recurrence of such abject conditions has brought back these and similar phrases into modern speech. They have not yet escaped the stir made five hundred years ago by his opinions, opinions which, while somewhat inchoate, nevertheless had a real influence for their own age, as the Peasants' Revolt sufficiently attests."

The Peasants' Revolt, to which Dr. Cadman refers, is one of the most horrible tragedies in English history. It broke out only three years before Wycliffe's death. Its immediate cause was the desperation of the common man, ground beneath the pitiless exactions of nobility and church. The attempt of the weakling Richard II to impose an additional tax was the spark that set off the explosion. The maddened peasants rose, murdered the Archbishop of Canterbury and another of the king's ministers, and would have murdered John of Gaunt had he not been absent from home. As it was, they sacked and burned his palace. For a few days they held the kingdom in their grasp. Then, induced to return to their homes by the fair promises of the king, the revengeful power of the nobles was loosed upon them. Their leaders, Wat Tyler and John Ball, were slain, together with thousands of their followers. And the whole uprising was put down with the most callous betrayal of solemn promises and with frightful bloodshed.

Wycliffe was accused of complicity in the uprising. In one sense, the accusation was justified. His teaching of the individual man's right to judge for himself and to be provided with his fair share of the goods of life was exactly suited to bring on just such an uprising as had occurred. Nor did Wycliffe shun the issue. He ranged himself on the side of the peasants and, although it cost him the last of his support from the nobility and put his life in new danger, he never deserted the cause of the poor. In that his course stands in strong contrast with that of Luther who, frightened by the Peasants' War that followed on the heels of his preaching in Germany, turned on his humble followers and advised the nobles to slaughter them without mercy.

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And finally, in the noblest sense of the term, John Wycliffe was an adventurer. He was ever reaching out toward the new. He could not be content to stay where he was; he sought a better country. Every major interest of his life represented just such adventure. His declaration that the Church must return to simplicity and poverty of life was adventure. His rejection of the priestly authority implied in the Roman dogma of the mass was adventure. His translation of the Bible was adventure. His sending out of his "poor priests" was adventure.

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These, then, were the elements that set John Wycliffe apart from his fellows and that have made him one of the abiding figures of history. When we turn now to consider him more particularly as a religious leader, we have no difficulty in seeing how these elements came together to make possible his great religious contribution. That contribution can in large measure be summed up by saying that he set before his countrymen the ideal of a Church freed from the rule of a foreign pope, and a religion that was made fully the possession of the common people. And it is because of this contribution that Wycliffe is called "The Morning Star of the Reformation."

We must look with some care at Wycliffe's contest with the papacy. He confronted that ancient and powerful institution when it was at low water mark. If we surmise that Wycliffe was born in 1320—this is only a surmise, but it is one favored by many historians—then for eleven years before that the papacy had been removed from Rome and had been installed, as a support of the claims of the French king, in the French city of Avignon. Instantly with that removal, the pope became more or less of a political puppet, with his claims, which had been built up to great heights during the preceding century, made the sport of contentions between the rulers of Europe.

All Wycliffe's life was spent in the midst of this contest between the pope and his French supporters on one side and the other kings and nobility on the other. The opposition to papal claims centered in Germany and England. Nineteen years after the popes went to Avignon, the German reichstag, meeting at Frankfort, declared that the German emperor needed no papal confirmation in order to enter upon his reign. Two years before the birth of Wycliffe, the Italian poet, Dante, published his "On Monarchy," in which he marked a clear line between the power of the emperor in temporal affairs and that of the pope in the purely spiritual realm. And while Wycliffe was still at Oxford the English parliament outlawed any English subject who should appeal outside the kingdom to the judgment of the pope. Moreover, in 1366, when Wycliffe was just entering on his public career, parliament renounced all the engagements which, more than a century before, the badly frightened King John had entered into, making his kingdom a fiefdom of the papacy.

But the thing that seems to have been most instrumental in bringing Wycliffe into open opposition to papal pretensions was the Great Schism which took place in 1377. In that year the same body of cardinals elected two popes. One chose to live at Rome, and one at Avignon. And for as long as Wycliffe continued to live—indeed, until the time of Huss—there were two popes, each claiming to be the true repository of a power given directly from God which placed them in authority over all mankind, and each anathematizing the other as a false pretender. Naturally, the time came when plain men were ready to cry: "A plague on both your houses." So that it was not against any one pope that Wycliffe rose in rebellion; it was against the scandal of a divided papacy.

Moreover, Wycliffe's English patriotism rebelled against any system by which his nation should be either ruled or taxed for the benefit of a churchly court in Rome or Avignon. The expenditures of the medieval popes were enormous. No matter how large the revenues that flowed into their coffers, they always seemed in need of more money. Hence, they were always trying to work out schemes whereby appointees to bishoprics, and even humbler church offices, should make payments of some kind to the papal treasury; or whereby a larger proportion of the tithes and other income of local churches and monasteries should be passed on to the support of the head of the Church; or whereby the sale of indulgences or similar revenue-raising schemes might be fostered.

Naturally, the kings had no enthusiasm for such a situation. It gave them no satisfaction to see so considerable a part of the revenue of their realms leaving home for Rome. And when there came to be not only one papal court demanding support, but two, the rulers of Europe were in a mood to favor revolt It hardly needs to be said that the common people, who had to produce most of these revenues in the first place, were equally ready to forego the privilege of supporting two papacies in the style to which one had become accustomed. Wycliffe's declaration that a pure papacy would not require money for worldly display therefore found its source as much in his patriotism as in his religious ideas.

Wycliffe's scholarship furnished another major element in his break with churchly tradition. It was his study of the New Testament that convinced him that there was no sound basis for the papal doctrine of supreme authority. The Church, he came to believe, is not a matter of an organization formed by pope and priests; the Church is the company of those who have been saved. The head of the Church is not the pope; the head is Christ. The pope may be a valuable official to have, particularly if he is a good man and tries to make the Church a power for simple righteousness in the earth. But the pope may just as easily be a sinner as anybody else. And, added Wycliffe, if you see a pope who is grasping after power and worldly honor and wealth and ease, you can pretty nearly make up your mind that he is no real Christian. And when Wycliffe, with his scholarly reputation, announced these as his conclusions, based on immediate study of the Scriptures, the world of his day listened.

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The fight between the English reformer and the papacy was no sham battle. In the beginning, Wycliffe had the ardent support of many of the most powerful of England's nobles, and even of parts of the English priesthood. His demand that the papacy give up its worldly pretensions and accept a life of simplicity and even poverty was in full accord with the teaching of the monastic orders, particularly the Franciscans. And so, when first the popes began to take notice of this lone scholar's challenge and to respond to it with the bulls and threats habitually visited on heretics, almost the whole nation rallied to the reformer's support.

Wycliffe, however, was not content to accept support from the wandering friars. He insisted on pointing out their laziness and low morals, and so alienated them. When he attacked the endowments of the monasteries and great churches, he drew the enmity of the higher orders of English clergy. Out of this came one of the most dramatic incidents in Wycliffe's career—his appearance, under the protection of John of Gaunt and Lord Henry Percy, marshal of England, before William Courtenay, then bishop of London, to answer charges of heresy. The scene, which took place in St. Paul's cathedral, has been described by Dr. Cadman in this fashion:

"Gaunt, who was detested by the freemen of the city for his cupidity and arrogance no less than for the plottings and chicaneries of his followers, stood at Wycliffe's side throughout the stormy interview, fuming and threatening that he would pull down the pride of all the bishops in England. . . . Percy's insolent behavior exasperated the spectators crowding the aisles of the ancient Church and the adjacent streets, and the disturbance which attended the passage to the Lady Chapel annoyed Courtenay, who declared, had he known beforehand that Percy would act the master in the cathedral, he would have barred his entrance. The duke, blind with rage, replied for his retainer that he should do as he pleased. While prince and prelate exchanged defiances, Wycliffe seems to have calmly awaited the hearing. Even Courtenay, the most gifted and most resolute of his foes, whose opposition finally crushed the Wycliffian movement, sank into comparative insignificance when contrasted with the last great Schoolman of Europe, the first clerk of Oxford, and the noblest and most astute thinker left in a decadent and reactionary age."

The whole hearing, after hours of senseless bawling back and forth on the part of the bishop and the duke, broke up in a row. Wycliffe, of course, escaped judgment. The bishop thereupon appealed to the pope at Rome, who immediately responded with five bulls holding eighteen of the doctrines taught by Wycliffe to be heretical, and ordering the king of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and the University of Oxford, to arrest "the said John" and keep him in prison until the further commands of the Holy Father might be received. The time never came when the popular temper permitted either Bishop Courtenay or any of Wycliffe's other enemies to attempt to carry out that order from Rome.

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We have no space in which to trace in all its windings the progress of the contest between Wycliffe and the papacy. It is enough to say that when Wycliffe finally attacked the doctrine of transubstantiation in the mass—holding that it gave the priests a supernatural power which they used to mulct the common people—he lost his position at Oxford, for after such an attack on the central religious dogma of the Church of that time the university could not longer resist the Church's demand for his resignation. But when he retired to his little church in Lutterworth, he soon made that village the center for a religious revival that touched all England.

It is a noble picture that we have of Wycliffe in his closing years. Gradually he had lost the support of the mendicant friars, of the lower orders of clergy, of the nobles, of the university. He was now only a simple parish priest, and none too secure in that position. But, despite the papal condemnation that hung over him, he drew, like some magnet, scores of men burning with a new religious earnestness, who sought him out in his retreat. They found him, with one or two companions of his old university days, engaged in the great task of translating the Bible into the tongue of the common people. Tradition holds that Wycliffe himself translated only the New Testament; that the translator of the Old was Nicholas of Hereford. By whatever hands the task was done, the important fact is that it was done.

And then, each bearing portions of this new version of the Scriptures, Wycliffe sent his "poor priests" out, two by two, to pass on his message to the common folk of England. In the beginning, most of these itinerant preachers were ordained; later the ranks were largely filled with laymen. With no money in their purses, barefoot, clad in the simplest sort of robe, staff in hand, these men went from town to town, from farmstead to farmstead, preaching a religion that might be the personal experience of each believer, without the interposition of priest or sacrament. Out of their preaching came that religious awakening that history calls the Lollard movement.

Death came to John Wycliffe peacefully. He was at Lutterworth, continuing to carry on the duties of his pastorate, even though a paralytic stroke had warned him that the end could not be far off. Another papal order had arrived from Rome, demanding that the heretic travel there to answer personally before the pope for his heresies. To that the gaunt old man had replied in words that give the very kernel of his whole message:

"I have joyfully to tell to all men the belief that I hold, and especially to the pope, for I suppose that if my faith be rightful and given of God the pope will gladly confirm it, and that if my faith be error, the pope will wisely amend it. Above that I suppose that the pope is most obliged to the keeping of the gospel among all men that live here, for the pope is highest vicar that Christ has here on earth. For the moreness (superiority) of Christ's vicar is not measured by earthly moreness, but by this, that this vicar follows Christ more closely by virtuous living. Now Christ during the time he walked here was the poorest of men, and put from him all manner of worldly lordship. From this I take it as a wholesome counsel that the pope should abandon his worldly lordship to worldly lords, and move speedily all his clerks to do the same. For thus did Christ, and thus he taught his disciples, until the fiend had blinded this world. And if I err in this sentence (opinion) I will meekly be amended, yea even by death, for that I hope would be a good to me."

But the old reformer was not to appear before the pope. His summons was to a higher tribunal. A few weeks after he had made this last declaration of his faith, as he was officiating at the mass in his church at Lutterworth, at the moment of the elevation of the host, another paralytic stroke struck him down. Three days later, on the closing day of the year 1384, he entered into rest.

It would be pleasant to end the story here, but that cannot be done. For after Wycliffe had been buried for more than thirty years there followed him one of those blind expressions of malignancy all too characteristic of the religious controversies of that time. On May 4, 1415, the council of Constance, which had met to reform the abuses in the Catholic Church, and to bring to an end the scandal of a divided papacy, ordered that Wycliffe's remains should be dug up and burned. The memory of the man still had too strong a hold on England's masses to make any cleric ready to carry out the vindictive order at the moment. But thirteen years later a bishop of Lincoln did as the council of Constance had commanded. (He was the same bishop, by the way, who founded the college at Oxford of which John Wesley became a fellow—which seems like another of time's ironies.) So, forty-four years after his death, the bones of John Wycliffe were given to the flames, and his ashes scattered abroad. On that mean-spirited act, William Wordsworth was later to make the abiding comment:

> "Once more the Church is seized with sudden fear,
> And at her call is Wyclif disinhumed:
> Yea, his dry bones to ashes are consumed

And fling into the brook that travels near;
Forthwith, that ancient Voice, which Streams can hear,
  Thus speaks (that Voice which walks upon the wind,
  Though seldom heard by busy human-kind)—
'As thou these ashes, little Brook! wilt bear

Into the Avon, Avon to the tide
  Of Severn, Severn to the narrow seas,
    Into main Ocean they, this deed accurst
  As emblem yields to friends and enemies
How the bold Teacher's doctrine, sanctified
    By truth, shall spread, throughout the world dispersed.'"

It is the custom of historians to point out that the Lollard movement, subjected to fierce persecution in the years immediately following Wycliffe's death, was stamped out within another generation. And so, in one sense, it was. As an acknowledged movement, certainly it was. The casual observer, coming into Europe in the early decades of the fifteenth century, would have found far more evidence of the influence of Wycliffe in the Bohemia of John Huss than in the England of Henry the Fifth and Sixth, and the other kings who reigned up to the time of Henry VIII. Wycliffe's work was so completely brought to an end, viewed from this angle, that it seems absurd to speak of him as the father of the Church of England.

But there is another sense in which his work can be seen to have survived. The message that Wycliffe proclaimed—a purified church, freedom from the control of any papacy or priestly oligarchy, religion as the personal experience and possession of the common people—that message did not die. It could not die, because it was a kernel of living wheat which, sinking beneath the soil of English life, brought forth finally the harvest of the English reformation. Practically all of the ideas on which that reformation proceeded in the days of Henry VIII are to be found in the teaching of Wycliffe. And therefore, I maintain, we are justified in calling him one of the real fathers of the Church of England as we know that Church to-day.

VII

WESLEY AND THE METHODISTS

11

VII

WESLEY AND THE METHODISTS

ONE winter's night in the year 1709 the little Lincolnshire village of Epworth was thrown into uproar. Bright flames, such as are fed by a straw-thatched roof, sprang high against the night sky. Men and women went shouting along the village lanes, calling for buckets, for ladders, for all those futilities after which there is search even when the destroyer is beyond all control. And as the country folk came tumbling from their beds, stumbling against each other in the dark as they ran through the narrow streets to the place where the flames beckoned, they called to one another: "They've done it at last. I was sure it would happen sometime. Many's the time parson's been warned to guard that whiplash tongue of his. But no; he would go ahead. Now they've fired the rectory!"

At the burning rectory, all was confusion A few bold spirits had tried to dash inside to rescue such furniture as could easily be moved. But the thatched-roofed rectory burned like tinder; it seemed only a matter of minutes until it had been transformed into a furnace in which no mortal could survive. In the street the little rector, undaunted by this latest evidence of the lack of regard in which he was held by some of his parishioners, rushed about to make sure that all his numerous family had been brought to safety. But before, in the confusion, he could finish his enumeration, a cry from the crowd warned him. "See there! In the window! It's the little boy! It's Jacky!"

In some way the little six-year-old chap had not been aroused in the wild rush of the parsonage dwellers to safety. Now, wakened too late, he was standing, silhouetted against the flames, in the casing of a window in the rectory's second story. The rector, thinking the child lost, sank on his knees to commend his passing soul to God. But, while the father's eyes remained closed in despairing prayer, two stalwart villagers dashed forward; the one raised the other a-top his shoulders, leaning against the rectory wall; the man at the top reached out his hands; the little boy jumped into them; and immediately the last of the roof beams came crashing in, while the old rectory roared to its complete destruction.

None of that rectory family ever forgot that seemingly miraculous rescue—the little boy least of all. Years later, when a man of fifty, and when his death seemed close at hand, the boy wrote his own epitaph, "to prevent," as he put it, "vile panegyric" on the part of his followers. This was what he asked to have carved on his tomb:

HERE LIETH THE BODY
OF
JOHN WESLEY
A BRAND PLUCKED OUT OF THE BURNING
WHO DIED OF A CONSUMPTION IN THE FIFTY-FIRST
YEAR OF HIS AGE
NOT LEAVING, AFTER HIS DEBTS ARE PAID,
TEN POUNDS BEHIND HIM:
PRAYING,
GOD BE MERCIFUL TO ME, AN UNPROFITABLE
SERVANT!

John Wesley and Samuel Wesley, his father, and Susannah Wesley, his great mother, were all sure that Providence had directly intervened to pluck this brand from the burning for some great purpose. And, in the light of history, who will gainsay their faith?

* * * *

John Wesley is another difficult subject for the writer of such a sketch as this. But the trouble in his case is not, as it was with John Wycliffe, that we do not know enough about him. The trouble is exactly the opposite: we know too much. The man lived so long, he touched life at so many points, and there has been left for us such a mountainous heap of material concerning his career, that the writer, who must keep within narrow limits of space, turns away baffled by the very richness of the lode he is asked to develop.

Writing a sketch of Wesley becomes, of necessity, a selective process. Its outcome depends on the writer's wisdom in choosing what to overlook. Here are some of the causes for this amazing richness of the Wesley treasure:

The man lived much longer than most men. His life virtually spanned a century. During at least half that century he was the most active, and historians are now coming to agree that he was the most significant, figure in the life of his nation. To a degree beyond that of any of his contemporaries, he went everywhere and he knew everybody. The mere fact that material concerning John Wesley began to accumulate in 1703 and did not cease piling up until 1791 is enough in itself to account for the unmatched extent of this treasury.

Again, the man wrote incessantly. He made it his habit to rise at four every morning, and from his college days he trained himself never to waste a minute throughout the day. But there were hours when he could not be preaching or "meeting the societies" or instructing his preachers. When those hours came, whether he was stopping in some inn or jouncing along the post-roads in his specially built chaise, he turned to writing. He kept a daily journal that, in print, remains our best source for an understanding of eighteenth-century England. In addition, he kept a voluminous secret diary in shorthand.

He wrote more than two hundred books and pamphlets; he edited enough others so that his name stands as editor or author of more than 450 separate publications. He edited a magazine. He wrote letters by the ream. No religious leader in history—not even Luther—has left himself as completely in print as has John Wesley.

Moreover, he became a subject for biographers from the year of his death, and the stream of biographies seems to be running more deeply and swiftly to-day than ever. Within the last twelve months there have been at least six new Wesley biographies, one of them—and a good one—written by a Belgian Catholic priest.

Finally, the richness of the Wesley material owes much to the fact that the man seemingly found time to dabble in everything. The old Roman who said that nothing that had to do with humanity was foreign to him had nothing on John Wesley. This little Oxford don had exactly the same insatiable curiosity that is supposed to be the peculiar mark of the scientific explorers of our present age. He seemed determined to know something about everything. And on every matter that he touched he either left his opinions or his record of actual activity—generally both. Thus, it is possible to study John Wesley on politics, on scientific research, on medicine, on banking, on psychic phenomena, on poetry, on music, on education, on economics, on unemployment relief, on prison reform, on slavery reform, on temperance reform, on child training, and on scores of other topics, not to mention religion. Volumes could be written on Wesley's relation to every one of these matters; indeed, volumes have been. And the lode is still a long way from exhaustion.

Thus you can understand why the writing of such a sketch as this must be an exercise in elimination. I cannot pretend to give more than a few fugitive glimpses at the man as I think he was. But these are glimpses at the aspects of his character that I think are most worthy of being generally remembered.

* * * *

First of all, I think it is well to remember that that Methodist revival, which shook England to its foundations and has left its imperishable mark on the whole world, was the work of as cultivated, as cultured a man as lived in the England of his day. Some day, when the eugenists have tired of talking about the family of Jonathan Edwards, they may well turn to the Wesleys. In that gallery of England's great, the Dictionary of National Biography, seven Wesleys stand in unbroken line, reaching from John Wesley's great-grandfather to the grandson of Charles, the great organist and composer, Samuel Sebastian Wesley. John Wesley's maternal ancestry was as distinguished as that which came to him through his father. The story has often been told of the way in which a wealthy and titled member of the family, an Irish baronet, offered to make Charles Wesley his heir, and when the offer was declined chose the grandfather of that Arthur Wesley, or Wellesley as he came to spell it, who became the Duke of Wellington and victor of Waterloo.

John Wesley was a blue blood of the blue bloods. The fineness of his breeding showed even in his physical presence. Although a small man, standing barely five feet four, every feature seemed as exquisitely formed as though done in the finest porcelain. The skin was like that of a child; the fingers those of an artist; the hair long and silken and with such a sheen that the records tell of a prize fighter, part of a mob that had come to stone the little preacher, stroking his hair with a kind of awe and swearing that not a finger should be allowed to touch him. There was in Wesley none of that peasant roughness that marked Luther and Knox and Fox, and some of the others we have considered, as long as they lived. He was an aristocrat to his finger tips.

With pride of race John Wesley might have coupled, had he been so minded, pride of cultural attainment. He was a scholar, and the son of scholars. His father was a friend of Pope and Dryden and Swift; the son was a friend of Samuel Johnson and Benjamin Franklin and of practically all the members of the circles that moved around them. He was in residence for years as a teacher at Oxford; to his dying day his proudest claim lay in the line which always stood upon the title-pages of his books: "Sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford." He was proficient in six languages; his conversation and correspondence with his brother Charles were habitually carried on in Latin. His Journal shows that he read omnivorously, devouring the contents of books that the early Methodists would generally have agreed were totally unfit mental provender for a man who claimed to be fleeing from the wrath to come.

All this may not be of great importance. God, we are assured by another spiritual leader who might have possessed pride both of birth and of cultural attainment, is no respecter of persons. The work of the kingdom shows need for men with every imaginable background. But there has been a tendency, among the thoughtless—and uninformed—sophisticates to dismiss John Wesley as the eccentric leader of a wild-eyed and undisciplined horde of unlettered religious fanatics. The truth is that John Wesley was as poised, as well-trained, as well-bred a man as his day produced. And he placed the marks of that personal inheritance and cultural interest deeply on the movement which he fathered.

* * * *

Yet I want to guard against misunderstanding at this point. If John Wesley was an epitome of the breeding and culture of England's finest aristocracy, he was also a man of the people. He made himself that, under the compulsion of his consuming religious passion. It was no easy task. He could not, as a young man, make himself a real friend of the rude folk of Wroote, the little village which formed what American Methodists would call the "out appointment" of the Epworth parish, and where John Wesley served as curate for his father. Neither could he, despite the consecrated devotion with which he undertook his task, find a basis for understanding or real friendship with the colonists in Georgia. Both enterprises, the curacy at Wroote and the Georgia mission, ended unhappily, and the congregations in both cases were probably glad to see the last of their minister. He was "high hat."

But this aloof young cleric became, before his death, the idol of millions. He learned to live, with perfect comfort, in the rudest farmhouses, the humblest cottages. There were even times when he slept under hedges. His closest comrades, the men who became his immediate disciples in his vast campaigns, were men like Nelson, the stonemason, or Mather, the baker, or Asbury, the gardener's boy. The older he grew, the more uneasy he became concerning the spiritual outlook for the rich and comfortable, and the more at home with the poor and friendless. George Whitefield, his great contemporary, was born in poverty and reared in the debilitating atmosphere of a taproom. Yet he tended increasingly with the years to find his most satisfying moments in the drawing-rooms of the nobility. Wesley, the born aristocrat, tended with the years to find his greatest satisfaction in the ministry which he was able to perform with the miners of Cornwall, the slum-dwellers and prisoners of London, the peasants of Ireland.

Indeed, Wesley fitted himself so completely into the deprivations and the harshness of the life of the English poor of his day that his best friends came to wonder how he could stand it. How could this fragile little man come so easily through the uncomfortable situations into which his work was forever leading him? Wesley's answer was characteristic. "By the grace of God," he said, "I never fret; I repine at nothing, I am discontented with nothing." And because he so perfectly adapted himself to the conditions of England's common people, it became possible for Wesley, with his helpers, to carry to victory that crusade which Adam Clarke, the famous theologian, so graphically described:

"Our Societies were formed from those who were *wandering upon the dark mountains*, that belonged to *no Christian Church;* but were awakened by the preaching of the Methodists, who had pursued them through the wilderness of this world to the High-ways and the Hedges—to the Markets and the Fairs—to the Hills and Dales—who set up the Standard of the Cross in the *Streets* and *Lanes* of the *Cities*, in the *Villages*, in *Barns*, and *Farmers' Kitchens*, etc.—and all this in such a way, and to such an extent, as never had been done before, since the Apostolic age."

* * * *

One fact about John Wesley is sure to impress the most superficial student of his career. He was one of the bravest men who ever lived. There wasn't a chemist's trace of fear, either moral or physical, in him. In the early years of the Methodist movement, Wesley's passage about Britain went on to an almost constant accompaniment of riots. Bishops and important clerics thundered against him from the pulpits; too often the mobs felt that they were therefore given the license of the Church to attack the religious innovator. Yet the little preacher never flinched. He tells us himself that he made it his rule "always to look a mob in the face." And that rule, unhesitatingly followed, probably saved his life more than once.

We have several records of wounds suffered by Wesley. It is noticeable, however, that most of these came from stones thrown from a distance or from blows delivered from behind. When John Wesley got a man in front of him, close enough to look him in the eye, it was seldom that there was any violence. Richard Watson Gilder, in his great ode on Wesley, speaks of

> "those clear, piercing, piteous eyes. . . .
> The very soul that over England flamed!"

Wesley never used a weapon, never lifted his hand in self-defense. But the bearing of his head and the flash of his eyes were defense enough.

Perhaps the worst time that he ever had was at Walsal, in Staffordshire, where he had been hustled by a mob before the local justice. The justice refused to act, saying that he had already gone to bed and did not want to be disturbed. This left Wesley alone, at night, in the midst of a surging mob. One brute struck him several times, from behind, with an oak club. This emboldened another, who rushed up with arm lifted to strike. But, as he reached Wesley, his arm fell and he began to stroke the little preacher's head, exclaiming, "What soft hair he has!"

Missiles thrown from other parts of the crowd brought the blood. The heedless mob pushed their victim from one part of the town to another. In a sudden moment of quiet he cried: "Are you willing to hear me speak?" "No, no!" came the answering roar, "knock out his brains; down with him; kill him at once!"

Reduced to utter helplessness, Wesley began to pray. The words could not carry far, but they reached the mob's leader, one of those, undoubtedly, who were holding his arms pinioned. "Sir," he suddenly said, "I will spend my life for you; follow me, and no one shall harm a hair of your head." And, with three or four of his comrades, this ruffian, who turned out to be a prize fighter, carried the preacher safely out of the crowd. The rescuer was himself rescued, and later became a lay preacher.

* * * *

John Wesley must be ranked with Ignatius Loyola and William Booth as the greatest organizers in Christian history. As has already been said, he was a distant relative of the Duke of Wellington, and the two showed equal powers of command. All three of these great captains of the Lord's host—the founder of the Society of Jesus, the founder of the Salvation Army, and the founder of the Methodist movement—were men who would brook no division of command. They expected absolute obedience from their followers, and they held the final plans of campaign tightly in their own hands. But because of this singleness of authority, and because of the absolute discipline, all three were able to form spiritual armies that early acquired the habit of victory.

This is not the place in which to attempt to outline the tightly controlled Methodist system, as it developed from the class meeting to the annual conference. But Wesley's own description of this latter body, which included all the preachers, will give the spirit of the whole movement: "For above six years after my return to England," he wrote, "there was no such thing. I then desired some of my preachers to meet me, in order to advise, not control me. And you may observe, they had no power at all, but what I exercised through them. I chose to exercise the power which God had given me in this manner, both to avoid ostentation, and gently to habituate the people to obey them when I should be taken from their head. But as long as I remain with them, the fundamental rule of Methodism remains inviolate. As long as any preacher joins with me, he is to be directed by me in his work."

Directed, the preachers certainly were. Not only did Wesley choose their fields of labor, but he watched them with an intentness that is almost beyond belief. If a man was lying abed in the morning until six o'clock, he was sure to get a letter from Wesley before long, asking why he was not preaching at five. If he was failing to keep up in his reading, he would receive a brisk note offering him his choice between study or going back to his carpenter's bench. If he was over-long when praying, or over-loud when preaching, or over-complacent at the compliments paid him after the service was over, a letter of reproof was as certain to arrive in due time as though the distant leader was a member of the local congregation.

Wesley told not only his preachers but his followers generally what they should eat and drink; what they should wear; when they should go to bed; when they should get up; what they should read; how they should discipline their children; what medicine they should take; how they should vote. He prescribed for them the most personal details of their lives, and he remarked with the most charming simplicity that "many tell me to my face that I can persuade the people to do anything." That was almost literally true. "No founder of a monastic order ever more entirely possessed the respect as well as the love and admiration of his disciples," said Southey.

Of course, there were good reasons why Wesley was able to exercise this autocratic command with the success which attended his career. For one thing, he was a good commander. He made few mistakes. He knew how to win battles. Soldiers will serve gladly under the strictest of leaders if they feel that there is plenty of brains at headquarters. It is when the soldier begins to suspect that the general isn't sure what he is about that mutiny develops in the ranks. There was never any danger of that in Wesley's army; every soldier, from the recruit just taken from a shoemaker's last to men like Thomas Coke, who bore Oxford's doctorate of civil laws, and Adam

Clarke, who was said by many to be England's profoundest scholar, knew that the commanding general was worthy of his command.

Then, too, while Wesley demanded absolute obedience, he was not of the order of commanders who remain far from the battle line in some safe dugout. John Wesley *led* his men into battle. As a young evangelist, he faced the mobs who raged against the rise of Methodism. Even as an old man, in his eighties, he never ceased that endless round of inspections that took him into every corner of the British Isles, sometimes many times. He averaged over 4,500 miles of travel every year of his career; he preached over 42,000 sermons! From sixty to seventy miles a day, punctuated by at least three sermons, was his regular fare. Yet, as he entered his eighty-third year, he could say in his Journal: "I am a wonder to myself; I am never tired, either with preaching, writing, or traveling." No wonder the preachers were ready to take orders from a leader who used himself in that fashion.

There was this, also, about Wesley's autocracy —it was made easier by his readiness to take advice and even accept reproof from those associated with him. Decisions were always Wesley's, but he was ready to listen to any man before the decision was made. He was constantly reminding his preachers that he expected them to be what he called as "open" with him as he was with them. Of course, that is the sort of thing that domineering people frequently say, and then completely void in action. But Wesley was constantly giving proofs of his readiness to listen when his preachers favored some course other than he had proposed, or even to accept their reproofs with humility. Not long before his death he told Henry Moore that he had become one of his dearest friends because he had opposed him more often than any other man in the Methodist ranks!

Finally, there was a love for his men underlying Wesley's autocracy which they recognized and relied on. The famous letter to the society at Keighley, written in behalf of one of the early lay preachers who had fallen into grievous sin, will bear repeating:

> I have a few questions, which I desire may be proposed to the society at Keighley.
>
> Who was the occasion of the Methodist preachers first setting foot in Leeds? William Shent.
>
> Who received John Nelson into his house at his first coming thither? William Shent.
>
> Who was it that invited me, and received me when I came? William Shent.
>
> Who was it that stood by me when I preached in the street, with stones flying on every side? William Shent.
>
> Who was it that bore the storm of persecution for the whole town, and stemmed it at peril of his own life? William Shent.
>
> Whose word did God bless for many years in an eminent manner? William Shent's.

> By whom were many children now in Paradise begotten in the Lord, and many now alive? William Shent.
>
> Who is he that is ready now to be broken up and turned into the street? William Shent.
>
> And does nobody care for this? William Shent fell into sin, and was publicly expelled the society; but must he also be starved? Must he with his grey hairs and all his children be without a place to lay his head? Can you suffer this? Oh, tell it not in Gath! Where is gratitude? Where is compassion? Where is Christianity? Where is humanity? Where is concern for the cause of God? Who is a wise man among you? Who is concerned for the Gospel? Who has put on bowels of mercy? Let him arise and exert himself in this matter. You here all arise as one man, and roll away the reproach. Let us set him on his feet once more. It may save both him and his family. But what we do, let it be done quickly.
>
> I am, dear brethren, your affectionate brother,
>
> JOHN WESLEY.

Is it any wonder that a general who could so seek to care for the wounds of a soldier who had fallen out of the ranks should command the complete devotion of those who remained in the army? Or that Arnold Lunn should write that "young men, with Napoleonic ambitions, anxious to discover the secret of organizing and controlling vast undertakings, should study Henry Ford's Autobiography and John Wesley's Journal"?

* * * *

There are three other aspects of Wesley's character that should be mentioned, even in as brief a sketch as this. He was open-minded; he was a pragmatist; he was a true catholic. All three aspects are, it will be seen, closely allied.

As to Wesley's open-mindedness, it is sufficient to remember that he never ceased to remind his followers that "we think and let think." In a day when men held their theological opinions with a fierceness that to-day seems beyond belief, John Wesley gloried in the refusal of the Methodists to set up any doctrinal standards as a basis for membership in their societies. "I have no more right," he once wrote, "to object to a man for holding a different opinion from mine than I have to differ with a man because he wears a wig and I wear my own hair; but if he takes his wig off and shakes the powder in my eyes, I shall consider it my duty to get quit of him as soon as possible."

Wesley had his theological opinions, of course, and his sermons attempt to give his followers very definite ideas as to God, salvation, damnation, and all the other ideas with which religion has always dealt. Moreover, when the time came that other men did insist on shaking their wigs in his eyes, Wesley quickly proved himself a most formidable debater. But the most vehement attack never swerved him from his original position, which made the test of fellowship the ancient question: "Is thy heart as my heart? Then give me thy hand!"

Of the Methodists Wesley claimed: "There is no other religious society under heaven which requires nothing of men, in order to their admission into it, but a desire to save their souls. Look all around you. You cannot be admitted into the Church, or society, of the Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Quakers, or any others, unless you hold the same opinions with them, and adhere to the same mode of worship. The Methodists alone do not insist on your holding this or that opinion; but they think and let think! Neither do they impose any particular mode of worship on your former manner, be it what it may. Now, I do not know any other religious society, either ancient or modern, wherein such liberty of conscience is now allowed, or has been allowed, since the age of the apostles. Here is our glorying; and a glorying peculiar to us. What society shares it with us?"

Wesley was a pragmatist long before William James made that name popular. He had his theories—and some of them, in respect to such matters as ghosts and physics and medicine, make curious reading to-day—but his theories were never allowed to take control away from the demonstrated facts. In his methods of work, and in the organization of his movement, Wesley was in favor of anything that worked. Equally, he was ready to abandon anything that didn't work.

The famous Methodist class meetings were not a result of Wesley's planning. He heard of a Methodist who had used a certain method whereby to raise a needed sum of money from a group in Bristol; he saw that the method could be used and expanded to accomplish a number of other things. Out of his readiness to follow this experiment came the most effective instrument that the Methodists developed for fusing and disciplining their number. In the same way, Wesley threw the whole force of the Methodist movement behind field preaching, even though he confessed that he disliked it. "I love," he said, "a commodious room, a soft cushion, a handsome pulpit." But field preaching saved souls. That settled the issue with him. So it was with the employment of lay preachers. So with the ordinations for America and Scotland. So with a score of other things. "I cannot," he wrote in another connection, "argue against matter of fact." That was the Wesley note.

This same pragmatic attitude appeared in Wesley's theological thinking. He early saw that the tenets of the extreme Calvinism of his day were bound to lead, if followed to their logical conclusion, to an absurd outcome. As he put it: "The sum of all is this: one in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can. Reader, believe this or be damned. Witness my hand." Wesley's mind simply would not let him come out at such a conclusion. When the Calvinists quoted their proof texts, he had one reply: "What will you prove by Scripture? That God is worse than the devil? It cannot be. Whatever that Scripture proves, it never can prove this; whatever its true meaning be, this cannot be its true meaning. . . . No scripture can mean that God is not love." Arnold Lunn adds this comment: "In other words, Scripture must be interpreted by personal experience. The final touchstone of truth is the inner witness. The keynote to Wesley's religious experience was the discovery that God is love, and anything which contradicted that theory must be false."

* * * *

Even to-day, the catholicity of John Wesley remains a marvel. When considered in relation to the times in which he lived, it seems beyond belief. Of the catholicity of his interests I have already spoken. Now I am thinking of the ability which he showed to recognize and hail the good in every man, no matter how far outside his own group.

"The thing which I resolved to use every possible method of preventing," he wrote in describing the development of the Methodist movement, "was a narrowness of spirit, a party zeal, a being straitened in our own bowels—that miserable bigotry which makes many so unready to believe that there is any work of God but among themselves." Accordingly, one evening a month he gave to telling his societies of those in other communions, and even in so-called heathen lands, who were showing the fruits of righteousness, all, as he said, to hasten the time when the Methodists would know what it means to say: "Whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

This same catholicity of outlook made Wesley include the biography of the Unitarian, Thomas Firmin, among many which he edited for the reading of Methodists. He was equally cordial in his recognition of the high spiritual qualities in many saints of the Roman Catholic Church. He went beyond that. In a day when it was an almost universal belief among churchmen that the heathen were bound straight for hell, he wrote, after reading the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius: "I made no doubt but this is one of those 'many' who 'shall come from the east and the west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,' while 'the children of the kingdom,' nominal Christians, are 'shut out.'"

His spirit breathes through the formal answers to the first three questions that opened the Methodist Conference of 1770:

"1. Who of us is now accepted of God? He that now believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart.

"2. But who among those who never heard of Christ? He that feareth God and worketh righteousness, according to the light he has.

"3. Is this the same as 'He that is sincere'? Nearly, if not quite."

John Wesley could be convicted of heresy in many a Christian communion to-day on the strength of those answers.

Perhaps the greatest demand that ever was made on Wesley's catholic spirit came when his nephew, Samuel, great musician and son of the Methodist laureate, Charles Wesley, entered the Church of Rome. Charles Wesley could not be reconciled. But John wrote to "Sammy," as he called him, in a tone that held no bitterness. "Whether of this church or that, I care not," he said. "You may be saved in either, or damned in either; but I fear you are not born again; and except ye be born again you cannot see the kingdom of God."

* * * *

So the man lived out his century. So he passed, with the years, from almost universal execration to almost universal respect. Before he died, his own England seemed to have caught a glimpse of the value of the contribution which he had made to her spiritual welfare. At his passage, men everywhere bared their heads, "as though the king were going by." The churches and cathedral pulpits that once had barred him, vied with one another in pressing on him invitations to preach. At eventime it was light.

He died in 1791. To-day, more than a century after his passing, men are still eager to study the man and to discover, if they can, the secrets of his amazing power. He was, I am sure, beyond all question the greatest religious genius whom the Anglo-Saxon has produced. He was not, perhaps, as much of an innovator as Wycliffe. He was not, perhaps, as effective a preacher as Knox. He was not as much of a mystic as Fox. He did not have the imagination of Bunyan. Yet his combination of qualities was far greater than any of these possessed, and his contribution —made permanent in Methodism—circles the globe.

Of all the things that he taught it seems to me that there are three most worth remembering. In an age of sterile theological speculation, he pointed men to an *experimental* religion. His motto might well have been that of the Psalmist: "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Coupled with this went his insistence that *all* life may be sanctified, and brought into accord with the will of God. And, finally, his inclusive spirit made it impossible for him to preach of a God who excluded any from his love or who had not made full provision for the salvation of all. Religion, said John Wesley, was for all; it could be experienced by all; it would transform all. Is it any wonder that Methodism has been able to build on that foundation a structure broad and tall and strong?

VIII

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL AND THE DISCIPLES

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COMPARATIVELY speaking, the United States has produced few important religious innovations. Of course, the fact that there has been a United States for less than a hundred and fifty years has something to do with this. But it is still true that most Americans find themselves satisfied with religious connections that were originally imported.

My friend, Charles W. Wood, was traveling in Northern China a few years ago and asked a youngster in Mukden whether he was a Christian. Receiving an affirmative answer, he asked the boy what kind of a Christian he was. "I am an Irish Presbyterian," said this young Chinese. Mr. Wood thought this very funny—as I presume it is—and repeated it with gusto one day, while walking along Broadway in New York, to another friend of mine, Professor William Hung, of Peking. "Yes," said Professor Hung, "that sounds queer. But I'll venture that if I were to ask that policeman what kind of a Christian he is, he would tell me that he is a Roman Catholic."

Most Americans are in Churches that have had a foreign parentage. Our Episcopal friends like to remind us that they are really Anglicans. The Scotch burr echoes still in Presbyterian general assemblies. (They have just elected a McAfee as moderator, which is as should be.) The Methodists have just raised funds to restore Wesley's Chapel and the room at Oxford in which he lived. So it goes. If you find a group that claims an American birthplace, the chances are that it stands somewhere on the wings of the Christian movement. I presume that the two best-known religious bodies with American antecedents are the Mormons and the Christian Scientists.

But America does have the right to point with pride to one great group of Christians that came into being on her own soil and that stands to-day near the very center of the long line of communions. This group, according to Dr. H. K. Carroll's figures for 1928, now stands sixth in size among all the American communions, ranking immediately after the Presbyterians. Perhaps it is more significant to discover that last year it grew more rapidly than any other group, excepting only the total growth of the three bodies of Catholics and the thirteen bodies of Baptists. The Church of which I speak is, of course, the Disciples of Christ.

The Disciples are the spiritual sons and daughters of America's first frontier. They came into being during that storied period when the long emigrant trains began to find their ways over the Appalachians, down the Ohio, and on into the prairies of the Middle West. They were, in their beginnings, as American as a buckskin jacket. They have continued, despite the planting of colonies and outposts all over the world, as American as a Ford car. It is good to be able to close this series of sketches of the fathers of the Protestant Churches with an attempted picture of the Irish Scotchman—or Scotch Irishman—who brought to power this characteristically American body.

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Theodore Roosevelt was not the first to be lured by the romance of "The Winning of the West." Almost from the day on which Daniel Boone set out on his first colonizing expedition into Kentucky's "dark and bloody ground," the American imagination has responded to the appeal of that enterprise. It is not only the movie magnate, making his millions out of a "Covered Wagon," who appreciates the romance of the frontier. From the close of the Revolutionary War until the dawn of the present century, not a generation of boys grew up without having its eyes dazzled by the exploits which were the portion of those who "went West."

The story has been so often told, so well told, that I need not repeat it here. The long lines of wagons that followed the long caravans of horses and oxen. The well-trodden roads through Cumberland and a score of other gaps in the mountain wall. The rivers, bearing their pioneer freight on flatboats. The clearings in the forest. The turning of virgin sod. The crossing of the trails. The store, the inn at the crossroads. The coming of the post. The cluster of houses. The coming of the preacher; of the teacher; of the doctor; of the lawyer; of the politician. The town. The settled countryside. The new State. Such are the heads of the story of the days in which the star of empire took its westward way.

That early frontier was, socially speaking, a strange conglomeration of hard living and religious fervor. There were huge stretches of territory in which, for years, the most common medium of currency was barreled whisky. The village inn was, all too often, as foul a sinkhole as humanity could find to wallow in. Dueling was common. Much of it was ferocious dueling—men standing knee to knee, hacking away at each other with tomahawks or hunting knives. Moral standards were lax. The people of the frontier were, in the main, young. Few were as old as forty. And they were, in many cases, seeking freedom from the restraints of the older communities. Hot tempered, fierce willed, and completely individualistic, they were America's first generation of "flaming youth."

But with this full pulsing of the frontier life there went a never-flagging interest in religion. Most of the frontiersmen might be fully persuaded that they were bound to land in hell—for in that day the line of demarcation between the saved and the damned was very clear, and the whole community knew who stood on which side of the line—but that did not operate to lessen their interest in religious discussion. It was the day of the circuit rider, that wandering evangelistic knight of the saddlebags, who often seemed to the westward moving pioneers to be on the ground, ready to hold religious services, before they had their plows unslung from under the Saratoga wagon. But even in such communities as heard little preaching, religious discussion seldom ceased.

The camp meetings, which began to spring up soon after the turn of the nineteenth century, helped to keep this flame of religious interest burning. Those early camp meetings were the social centers of a sprawling countryside. Entire families came long distances, often spending days on the road. Once at the appointed place, they remained for a week or longer. For many, this provided the only occasion of the year during which they could see and talk with any large number of people. But the preachers took advantage of this social urge which had brought the crowds together to subject them to an intensive period of religious stimulus, with the result that the frontier was kept full of people whose talk was of the preaching at the last camp meeting or of the backslidings that would take place before the next one.

The crossroads theologian and the crossroads skeptic flourished. The crossroads theologian was generally a strict Calvinist, whose talk was of election and reprobation and decrees, although here and there a voice was lifted for the more cheerful Arminianism of the Methodists. The crossroads skeptic was apt to be a disciple of Thomas Paine, that firebrand of the Revolution, whose "Age of Reason" had already begun to make his name a shuddering horror to the pious and a rallying cry to the scoffers. Debate between the theologian and the skeptic went on interminably. It never reached any conclusions, because the two argued from different premises and generally in totally different realms. The theologian, regarding all the texts of Scripture as equally inspired, reared his structure of proof quotations from the Bible. The skeptic either pointed out what he considered discrepancies in the historical portions of that book, or fell back on the supposed failure of Nature to support the arguments for Deity.

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Into the midst of this rough, fluid, independent, religion-saturated society came the Campbells, father and son. They came as immigrants. But they struck their roots instantly and deeply into the new soil. Within a few years, they were as American as any of the other dwellers in the frontier villages which they made their home. Three years after the son reached Western Pennsylvania the second war broke out between the young republic and the mother country. Young Campbell was as much a patriot as though he had been born within sound of the muskets on Bunker Hill. Indeed, as one reads of the Campbells it is with a feeling that they were continually pilgrims in the earth until they reached the little village of Washington, but that from the moment they entered that patriotically-named little community they realized that they had found an abiding habitation.

Who were the Campbells? As the name indicates, they were Scotch. They were North of Ireland Scotch—Scotch who had come to Ireland in the train of Cromwell's destroying Ironsides; who had set up their homes and their pulpits in the midst of that desolation. They were Presbyterians, of course. But the father, Thomas Campbell, was the minister of a Church of Seceders—a member of one of the many parties that have withdrawn from the established kirk. The Seceders, in turn, had, by the time of Thomas Campbell's ministry, split into four parties, with Mr. Campbell serving as the pastor of what was, if completely described, an Old Light Anti-Burgher Secession Presbyterian Church.

It is not necessary to define the position of an Old Light Anti-Burgher Seceder, for Thomas Campbell was heartily sick of the division while he remained in it, and got out of it by emigrating to America at the first opportunity. Thomas Campbell was never a man for contention. A love of learning had been implanted in him during his student days in Glasgow University; he was essentially a thinker and teacher. When his efforts to heal the split among the Irish Presbyterian Churches had failed, he was glad to follow the advice of his friends and family and seek the New World. It was in the spring of 1807 that Thomas Campbell landed in Philadelphia, to find an Anti-Burgher Seceder synod in session there, and to be sent on quickly to a parish in the little town of Washington, not far from the developing trading post of Pittsburgh.

In the meantime, Thomas Campbell had left his entire family in Ireland, confident that they would be well cared for by his eighteen-year-old son, Alexander. It had long been the family ambition that the son should follow his father's footsteps through the University of Glasgow, but the poverty of the parsonage made that seem out of the question. The boy had, however, picked up a very creditable education under his father's instruction, so that when the father left for America the boy was able to take over the school-teaching which had been the main source of clerical income.

Within a year after his arrival in Western Pennsylvania, Thomas Campbell felt himself well enough established to send for his family. Alexander accordingly arranged passage, and set to sea in a mite of a boat, whose total crew, including officers and cook, numbered only twelve. It was a rather large responsibility, made none the less so when the ship promptly pounded herself to pieces, during a storm, on one of the Ionian Isles. Young Campbell was left on the Island, stranded, with a mother, two brothers, and four sisters dependent on him, and all their worldly goods lost. Characteristically, the one thing that he tried to save from the wreck was his books.

The shipwreck turned out to be a disguised blessing. Sympathetic islanders took care of the Campbells; they were able to make their way to the Scottish mainland; presently they found themselves in Glasgow, and there in the university Alexander had eight precious months. The eagerness with which he took advantage of the singular turn of fortune which had brought him to his father's *Alma Mater* is shown by his daily schedule during that period. Like Wesley, he rose at four. His class in French came at six; Greek Testament from seven to eight; Latin from eight to ten; then breakfast. In the afternoon, advanced Greek and logic, together with lectures and experiments in natural science.

Finally landing, with his mother and the other six Campbells, in Philadelphia in October, 1809, Alexander pushed his way over the Alleghanies, and before the month was out the entire family was reunited in Washington.

* * * *

Alexander Campbell's arrival in the United States coincided exactly with a crisis in his father's affairs. Thomas Campbell, coming into the scattered communities of Western Pennsylvania, had found it impossible to keep the inclusiveness of his heart within the bounds set by his Church's rules. While on a visit to a little congregation near Pittsburgh he had invited to the communion table any who loved the Lord Jesus, without regard to their churchly affiliations. The action had been reported to the presbytery, which had promptly disciplined the newcomer. The synod, when appealed to, had also failed to sustain any such "laxity" in administering the sacrament. The result was that Thomas Campbell severed his Presbyterian relations.

Of course, this did not mean that he stopped preaching. Ecclesiastical bonds in the frontier communities were far too weak to restrain any man who wanted to preach. Thomas Campbell went right on preaching in Washington to practically the same congregation that he had had before his break. But as he preached, his active mind framed a series of conclusions concerning the whole situation produced by the divisions in Protestantism, and the bitterness of the spirit in which those divisions were then maintained. These conclusions he determined to give to the world in the famous "Declaration and Address" which marks the real starting point of the history of the Disciples.

Briefly—if one can speak briefly of a document that is anything but brief—the "Declaration and Address" was a protest against denominational divisions, and an affirmation that "such as profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures" belong in the Church, which should be without schism, and in which all "should consider each other as the precious saints of God." It was an appeal for Christian unity, made in a day when there were no Stockholm or Lausanne conferences, no Lambeth proposals. It was the cry of a man, now nearing fifty, who had become utterly weary of the endless battling between sects in which religion seemed to have become involved, and who had a feeling that, somehow, if the way of Christ were followed it would be discovered to be a way of peace.

Thomas Campbell had more than his "Declaration." He had a slogan. He had never, with all his study, read a book on the psychology of salesmanship. But he had a divine intuition which told him that his essential position must in some manner be compressed into language that the common people could grasp at sight and remember forever. So came his memorable slogan: "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."

To Thomas Campbell and his first followers it seemed as though this slogan, this formula, offered a simple and direct way out of all the welter of contentions into which the churches had fallen. What were the arguments all about? Were they about matters that were in the Bible? No, said Thomas Campbell, in almost every case they were about doctrines and dogmas that might have been deduced, by human reasoning, from the Bible, but that surely were not plainly set forth in that volume. Trouble therefore came, not from what was in the Bible, but from what men added to the Bible. And peace would be found by getting back to the Biblical starting point. "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."

Unfortunately, as time has proved, this formula sounds a good deal more definite and simple than it really is. Where do the Scriptures speak? There have been various answers. The time was to come, for example, when the Seventh-Day

Baptists were quite confidently to claim that a genuine following of the Campbell formula would require the observance of Saturday as the Sabbath. Alexander Campbell met that by stating that the setting apart of the seventh day of the week was a provision of the "Old Testament dispensation," which could not be binding on New Testament Christians. Then how about foot-washing? And greeting the brethren with a holy kiss? Those customs and admonitions, too, were said to be geographical rather than general in their application. All of which really made Alexander Campbell, by distinguishing between the permanent authority of parts of the Bible, a forerunner of the higher critics, although he would have been indignant had he been accused of any lack of faith in the whole Book.

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I suppose that in the truest historical sense, Thomas, and not Alexander, Campbell was the father of the Disciples of Christ. But Alexander Campbell soon came to overshadow his father in the movement. Indeed, it is safe to say that without the son the work of the father would have left no abiding mark. Thomas Campbell had a message of importance for the Christian world. But that message was rejected at the first. Thomas Campbell was no man for controversy. He had no desire to force his views on anybody. He would have been entirely happy to settle down in Washington, or any other little town of that period; to teach the schools which his skill as a master always crowded with pupils; to talk with any small group that might gather about him; and finally to pass out of life with a sense of content that he had been able to live peacefully, leaving behind a brief remembrance as a man of piety, of learning, and of all-embracing friendliness.

Alexander Campbell was of another sort. He came to Washington, still less than twenty-one years of age, just in time to read the final proofs on his father's "Declaration and Address." He accepted his father's position. But he was not content to hold that position passively. There was that in the man which drove him to proclaim his views wherever opportunity offered. And because there were never wanting those to oppose him, the progress of the movement which Thomas Campbell had fostered, as his principal biographer says, "to put an end to religious controversy," soon became involved in some of the most heated and prolonged controversy that American religious life has known.

It was only necessary to look at a portrait of Alexander Campbell to know why, from the first, he was able to command attention in every community he entered. Tall, straight, his large head crowned with a shock of hair, his piercing eyes looking out above a high-bridged nose that out-Romaned most of the Romans, his lips set in the firm line that betokened command, Alexander Campbell seemed formed by Nature for the public platform. Speech came easily to him. His voice was made to thunder and roll, and he gave it vast, sonorous sentences on which to exercise itself; sentences in which the adjectives piled themselves up in many-syllabled splendor; sentences as orotund and awe-inspiring as the preferences of that frontier day could desire.

Naturally, he made an impression. For one thing, he honestly had something to say. Beyond that, he said it in precisely the way best calculated to give the scantily educated inhabitants of the pioneer towns a sense of the speaker's accomplishments. Out of his wide reading he drew allusions, illustrations, quotations that made his audiences know they were listening to a man of superior training. And all this wealth of learning was couched in a phraseology fully equal to that which Webster and Clay were then employing in the halls of congress. As, for instance, in these words, in which we get a glimpse of his attitude toward one of the burning issues of his time, as well as of the way in which he made that attitude known:

"Slavery, that largest and blackest blot upon our national escutcheon, that many-headed monster, that Pandora's box, that bitter root, that blighting and blasting curse under which so fair and so large a portion of our beloved country groans—that deadly Upas, whose breath pollutes and poisons everything within its influence—is now evoking the attention of this ancient and venerable commonwealth in a manner as unexpected as it is irresistible and cheering to every philanthropist—to every one who has a heart to feel, a tear to shed over human wretchedness, or a tongue to speak for degraded humanity."

That was the first sentence, and it was followed by many more of the same kind. It does not fit in with our tastes to-day. But in Alexander Campbell's day it was eloquence of the first order.

* * * *

It is a fact difficult to explain that Alexander Campbell was probably best known in his own day, and is to-day largely remembered, as a debater. The communion which he helped bring to birth did, it is true, produce several generations of stalwart debaters. But as for Alexander Campbell himself, the cold, historical fact is that in a career that extended from 1809 to 1866 he engaged in only five debates! And only three of these were on baptism!

To be sure, once Mr. Campbell had arrived for a debate, he debated. The stenographic reports of his debates fill volumes. The debates would continue over from twelve to sixteen or seventeen days. Very little was left unsaid at the close.

And the mass of material thus produced afforded ample ammunition for other debaters. So, in that sense, it is easy to understand how the reverberations of the Campbell debates filled the country, during the period between 1825 and the outbreak of the Civil War, with the legend of a figure who went up and down the countryside, debating wherever opportunity offered.

But while his debates gave Mr. Campbell his national reputation, his true power was elsewhere. No man ever debated such a powerful Christian body as the Disciples into existence, and no man ever will. It was not even in the pulpit, impressive as he was there, that this leader exerted his greatest influence. Two other forms of leadership that he attempted left more permanent impress than all his speaking.

The first was his work as an educator. In the little farming community where he settled, not far from Wheeling in what is now West Virginia, Mr. Campbell established a college. He called it Bethany College, and from it he sent out an endless procession of young preachers, eager to disseminate the Campbell ideas throughout the country. Beyond that, however, he was able to mold the character of the entire movement that had sprung up under his leadership through the paper which he founded and which he edited during all his active career. His movement—he would have resisted calling it a church—

never had any central government. The ties between separate congregations were of the flimsiest sort. But Mr. Campbell, by providing constant exhortation and suggestion through his *Millennial Harbinger*, welded this scattered movement into a single crusade.

The growth of the movement was astonishing. It started with a single society in 1809. As the spread of population to the west and southwest went forward, the tenets of the Campbells kept pace. By 1847, Henry Clay was able to write of Alexander Campbell as "the head and founder of one of the most important and respectable religious communities in the United States." By the close of the Civil War, which marked also the close of Mr. Campbell's career, there were nearly six hundred thousand followers of his "reformation" scattered about the United States.

For some time there was considerable debate as to what the new movement should be called. Some of the most important leaders, including Thomas Campbell, thought that all denominational names were unwarranted in Scriptural practice and a source of continuing division among Christians. They therefore preferred to use the simple term, Christian, and let it go at that. What Church do you belong to? Why, simply the Christian Church. What kind of a Christian are you? Why, simply a Christian. But Alexander Campbell's good sense, while admitting the grounds for his father's contention, saw the confusion that would undoubtedly arise through such a practice, when applied to a certain distinct religious body. He, therefore, expressed his preference for the earlier New Testament title, Disciple. And it is as the Disciples of Christ that the communion has been best known.

When one attempts to discover the secret of Mr. Campbell's tremendous power, as shown by the swift growth of the Disciples, the first fact that demands recognition is that, however he may have swayed men, he was not swayed by them. There was no compromise in the man. He stood foursquare to every wind that blew. He proclaimed what he believed to be the gospel, and he refused to budge an inch. Interesting illustrations of this unbending attitude are to be seen in his stands on two of the burning issues of his day, slavery and war. Throughout his career he lived and worked in a section where slavery was a recognized and defended institution. He never ceased to condemn it. He did not allow his Church to fight it, for he found nothing in the New Testament supporting such a course. But he, Alexander Campbell, was anti-slavery to the end. But he was just as outspoken against the resort to arms under any provocation, and when the struggle over slavery finally brought on the Civil War, he opposed that with equal vigor.

But, constructively, what was there about his message that moved such multitudes? Was it his insistence on immersion as the only Scriptural basis for fellowship? No; he largely shared that message with the Baptists, and it was in all likelihood a means of repelling as many as it attracted. What then? The answer seems to be that Alexander Campbell brought to the strident young American West a common sense attitude toward religion that exactly fitted the desires of thousands. It was a time, remember, when the churches rang with the proclamation of detailed and intricate "plans" of salvation. Mr. Campbell swept all that sort of thing aside. He held that the "plan" of salvation in the New Testament was, according to all the record showed, simply the acceptance of Jesus as Lord, and joining the Christian community. Moreover, it was a time when those who had no intricate dogmatic formulas were apt to insist on certain ecstatic, and often erratic, personal experiences as a prerequisite to Christian fellowship. Mr. Campbell, finding nothing of the sort required from believers in New Testament times, swept that away too. Salvation became, in his hands, simply the question as to whether one would take Jesus as his Lord and follow his teachings, supposedly revealed in the New Testament, as far as they were understood. To a plain invitation of that sort, the response was instant and tremendous.

* * * *

The closing years were patriarchal. The old man came back to Bethany, back to the spot where he had brought his first farm to prosperous cultivation, back to the place where he had founded a college and made it a national center, back beside the plot in which lay his first wife and most of his fourteen children. The great shock of white hair on top his head was now matched with a snowy beard that swept across his chest. His steps became more and more feeble. The war that was rending the States distressed him; he wrote of it as a sinful thing even after its swift consummation had become clear. There were periods when a veil settled over his mind; again it was crystal clear, and he was ready to go into the pulpit, or to discourse with the friends that came in numbers to share his parting days.

Death came quietly, after a period of some weeks during which the aged leader seemed to be slipping by imperceptible degrees into another life. Multitudes came in from all over Western Pennsylvania, from Virginia, from Kentucky, from Ohio and Indiana, and from places more distant, for the funeral. But that was no sign of the end of Alexander Campbell's influence. He lived on in the fellowship which he founded.

To a remarkable degree the Disciples of Christ continue to furnish America, not only with religious piety of a warm and steady type, but with leadership in many fields of fierce conflict. Speak of the Church's contribution to the ending of war and one thinks immediately of Charles Clayton Morrison and Kirby Page. Speak of the Church's contribution to the ending of social injustices or international abuses and one thinks of Alva W. Taylor and Samuel Guy Inman. Speak of the Church's progress toward a new freedom of thought and one thinks of Herbert L. Willett and Edward Scribner Ames. Speak of the Church's determination to end the "scandal of Christianity," our sectarian divisions, and one thinks of that father of the community church movement, Orvis F. Jordan, or that apostle of true catholicity, Peter Ainslie. All these men are Disciples, and there are many others of equal significance who stand within the ranks of that brotherhood. The body that Alexander Campbell brought to birth has not lost its power; it has a great work which it is still performing as it marches forward toward its acknowledged goal—the day when all divisions between Christians shall have been wiped out, and there shall be a single church of Christ ministering to all the earth.

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